THE CONTRITE AND

the

Humble Heart,

with

Motives and Considerations

for

THE PREPARING OF IT.

A contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.
Psalm 50. verse 18.



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Advertisement.

I Treat of the best of hearts; a contrite and humble one. A heart which is the price of heaven. An inestimable jewel, to purchase which we must sell all we posses. What detriment it may have suffered in my hand, who have fashioned it according to my own fancy, I pretend not to excuse. Though the jewel be unpolished, it is yet entire, and its interior value is still the same. True contrition and humility affect not exterior embellishments; plain sincerity becomes them best. A humble penitent, who has an angry God to appease, must think of something else. When Magdalene comes with penitential tears, to bathe her Saviour's feet, she forgets her looking-glass, regardless of its approbation. She brings precious ointments, it is true; but these are only for her Lord, not to adorn herself, or please the company.

The method I have followed may seem arbitrary, and require some explanation. I begin with the love of God. 1. Because it is the chief and only duty of man. 2. Because although the practice of repentance commonly begins with fear, proceeds with hope, and only ends in love; yet love is the thing principally aimed at. 3. Because there is no ground for either hope or fear, before we know our duty. When we know it, and consider how ill we observe it, then we begin to tremble at the thought of our appearance at the bar: the terror of a living God awakens us, and makes us sensible, *how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands*. For this reason, in the second place, I shew the general motives of fear: which, to prevent despair, I counterbalance with the motives of hope, and, lastly, because presumption is the greater danger of the two, (our pride inclining us to think repentance easy, and our self-love daily tempting us to defer it,) I have endea-

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voured to shew the danger of delay. These preparations I thought proper for a contrite and humble heart.

When I describe contrition, I dwell more upon resolutions of amendment than sorrow due to sin; because these resolutions are commonly more neglected. A little melancholy, or natural tenderness, prompted only by self-love, may oftentimes produce a sensible concern, and even tears, when we consider the danger we are in: though in the mean time our darling humours and sins, are equally dear to us as ever. We form faint resolutions of amendment; but they are only superficial: they produce no hearty detestation of sin: they are to God like compliments to our neighbours; mere words and ceremony.

The two sections of contrition have been printed apart, and acknowledged by their author St. Francis de Sales, Intro. part I. chap. xxi. I do not indeed sign my name, but only wish the reader and myself may sign the contents on our hearts.

In the first four sections of humility, there is little or nothing of my own. It would ill become me to pretend much acquaintance with so rare a virtue: besides, in such a matter, so repugnant to corrupt nature, there was need of greater authority than mine.

I conclude with the character of a good christian. Having described the heart, I thought it not amiss to finish the whole character. In this also, I advance nothing of myself. I chiefly quote the Scriptures and the Fathers, but occasionally introduce modern authors.

No matter who I am: I am a son of the church, and submit myself entirely to her. My name is *Christian*, and my sirname *Catholic*; the rest I have leave to conceal. God's honor, and my neighbours' good, are all I aim at.

MOTIVES OF LOVE.

SECT. I.

How it imports us to love God above all Things,

WHEN the Pharisee asked our Saviour, Mat. xxii. 36. *What is the great commandment in the law?* Our dear Redeemer, who came to perfect the old law, and change the bonds of fear into those of love, who brought down fire from heaven to inflame our hearts, replied, v. 37, 38, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the great commandment,*

I fear very few of us consider its importance. We little reflect on the one side, how great our obligations are to love God; and on the other, how great the advantages which necessarily attend this love. We little consider, how great our ingratitude is in omitting our chief duty; how great our folly in neglecting our chief good.

SECT. II,

That the Love of God is our greatest Duty.

TO make it plainly appear, that the love of God above all things, is the greatest duty of a christain; one would think it were enough to shew, that it is a duty which comprizes all our other duties; that it is the total sum of Christianity,

and that, without the least exaggeration, it is the whole duty of man; because all other precepts whatsoever are only so many branches of this great commandment, which is the root of all the rest. St. Cyprian calls it the grand epitome of all our obligations. And if necessary, it were easy to demonstrate, that as God is infinitely more perfect than all his creatures, because he really contains in his own essence all possible perfections; so our obligation to love him surpasses by far all other obligations, because it eminently comprehends them altogether.

This suffices to give us a confused idea of our duty at a distance. If we draw the prospect nearer, we shall find an infinite variety of pressing motives which enforces this obligation. Every single excellence of the object we adore is all divine: no shadow there of any blemish to obscure those charms which challenge our affection: nothing in our God, but what is infinitely amiable, and deserving infinitely more love than we are able to return. Since therefore all and every one of his innumerable excellencies are unlimited and boundless; since they all and every one deserve a suitable esteem; since they command our love as much as they deserve it; hence it follows clearly, that our duty is as boundless as their merit; and that as St. Bernard says, *There is no other measure of our love, than loving without measure.*

Among the numberless variety of those divine perfections, which *the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* 1 Cor. ii. 9. There is one which particularly claims our acquaintance, which, in a manner, is congenial with us; and which of all others, is best calculated to make a sensible impression on a generous heart; I mean, that of a true friend. We read in Ecclesiasticus, vi. 15.

that there is nothing comparable to a true and faithful friend: and that in the balance of the wise, he weighs much more than all the gold and silver in the world. As there is nothing better upon earth than a true friend, so there is nothing more pretended to. And as the world deceives us most, where we expect it least, so there is hardly any thing in which it more deceives us than in this. Of all that read these lines, perhaps there is not one who has not been very much mistaken in a friend: and it is no wonder if we always are so till we raise our hearts above this world, and fix them there, where we are sure to find a true and faithful one; who loves us gratis; always loved us; loved us even when we were his enemies; and will for all eternity continue the same love, unless we prove ungrateful, and refuse to love him above all things, as he very well deserves.

He loves us gratis; not for any good he gains by it, or any little service we can do him. He cannot stand in need of any of those goods, which he is every moment bestowing upon us. *Thou art my God,* says the psalmist, Ps. xvi. 2. *My goodness extends not to thee.* When we have done all we can, Luke xvii. 10. *We are unprofitable servants:* we have done ourselves the greatest good we can imagine; but our God is not a jot better for it, The fountain, says St. Austin, is not better for our drinking at the stream, nor the sun the better for our walking by his light. If I may use the expression of St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 14. *He sees not what is ours, but us.* He seeks for nothing but our love, and even this command he lays upon us, merely for our good, Deut. x. 12. 13. *And now* says he, *what does the Lord thy God require of thee? but to love him with all thy heart which I command thee this day for thy good.* Behold,

dear Christians, a true and faithful friend; and see how you can answer it to your good nature if you do not love him.

He always loved us, always thought of us; not only in general, but every one of us in particular; and loved us with a love eternal as himself. He says, in the prophet Jeremy, ch. xiii. 3. *I have loved thee with an eternal love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* And what more powerful attractive can there be to draw us to him, than that loving kindness, which from all eternity took care of our concerns, contrived our future happiness, and drew a scheme of all the necessary means to bring us to it? Except himself, he hardly thought of any thing but us: our first creation, our redemption, our salvation were always in his view; they were the eternal entertainments of his mind; they were the great design which gave occasion to the first production of this world, which we ungratefully prefer before him, though he made it for us, Eccl. ix. 14. *Never forsake your old friend, your new one will never be like him.* Alas! who can help it, if we will be so ungrateful, and forsake so ancient a friend! We may be sure it is impossible to find a new one comparable to him.

He loved us, even when we were his enemies, 'Tis true, the first production of the universe was proof enough; and no man can deny, but that so great a gift bestowed upon us for our use, abundantly sets forth the greatness of his love. But yet the whole creation of the world, is nothing to the constant conservation of it for our sakes, who have so long, so much abused it. If the first bestowing of a more than ordinary favor, without any previous merit on our side, be such an argument of more than ordinary love, what is the constant repetition and continuation of the same so

long a time? although the longer we enjoy it we demerit more and more, and are as obstinate in our ingratitude as he is constant in his kindness. Was there ever any true and hearty love like this? St. Paul expresses some resemblance of it in a second letter, which he writes to the Corinthians, and declares his readiness to serve them, 1 Cor. xii. 15. *Though*, says he, *the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.* We read it in the 12th chapter, which relates his rapture into the third heaven: and without all doubt this love of his was copied there from the divine original. If one small spark of this celestial love, had such a wonderful effect in the apostle's breast, what can we say or think of that immense and boundless fire of everlasting love, which no ingratitude of man was ever able to extinguish! though our God foresaw how much it was in vain to court our love, although he was not ignorant that his affection for so unworthy creatures would be more despised, the more he labored to endear us to him; though he knew beforehand the unparalleled ingratitude of men: nevertheless, he sent his only Son to save us; he could not hold his hand; he could not deny himself the satisfaction of being infinitely kind, *Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this!* Jer. ii. 12.

St. John discoursing of this love, takes notice of no other motive of it than our gratitude; our indispensible obligation to be grateful to so good a friend. *We love him*, says he, *because he first loved us*, 1 Jo. iv. 19. He does not say because he is infinitely good and perfect in himself, but because he has been infinitely good and kind to us. His reason I gather from the 12th ver. of the same chapter, where he says, *No man has seen God at any time*, and the 20, where he adds, *How can a man love God, whom he has not seen?* If we had ever seen him *face to face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. as all

the blessed spirits do in heaven, we should then have loved him here as they do there : the very sight of him (although he had never been kind) would have transported us beyond all thoughts of any thing but him ; it would have been impossible to entertain the least impression of any other love in competition with him. But because this happiness is not to be expected here, where it is impossible to *see him as he is*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. Therefore *St. John the Disciple whom* JESUS *loved*, Jo. xxi. v. 7. who by experience knew, that no impression sinks deeper in a generous heart, than the endearing obligation of returning love for love, pleads nothing else but gratitude for the fulfilling of this great commandment; *We love him*, says he, *because he first loved us*, 1 John iv. 19.

There is nothing more obliging than the love of a true friend ; and nothing else obliges us without it. Whatsoever the interior value of a benefit amounts to when we cast it up, the obligation is not taxed by any other weight or measure, than his love to whom we stand indebted for it. In this case, ingratitude, of all crimes, is the most unpardonable, a crime so base which human nature so abhors, that even the worst of men who are ashamed of nothing else can never endure, that any man should either say or think they are ungrateful. Other sins they publish to the world, but this they always labor to conceal. And though I scarce can think of any wickedness so infamous, but some have been so wicked as to glory in it ; yet ingratitude is so unworthy, carries so much baseness in the very front of it, that I could never hear of any that were ever proud of being thought ungrateful. Rather than a man should think they are so, they invent a thousand frivolous pretences to disown the obligation ; they quarrel with the benefit ; revile the benefactor ; and in

order to deny a less ingratitude they conceal it under a greater. So ashamed are they to own this fault, that they had rather be a thousand times ungrateful than be once esteemed so.

This is the crime which many of us are so guilty of, although we are as much unwilling to believe it as we are ashamed to own it. And one of the most notorious aggravations of our great ingratitude is this, that we not only are ungrateful, but are in a manner quite insensible of being so. Because our God is infinitely more our friend than any other can be, therefore we regard him infinitely less. We cannot without indignation observe one man ungrateful to another: the very story of an ungrateful action, says Seneca, puts us out of all patience, and gives us a loathing for the author of it. What an inhuman villain, we cry, to do so horrid a thing! And yet, when we observe, how horribly ungrateful a poor miserable creature is to our Creator, we take little notice of it, we regard it with a cold indifference as if we were content it should be so.

We cannot plead in our defence that we are ignorant, how much we stand indebted to him for his love: alas! we all know well enough, that there was never any love like his: so true, so ancient, and so constant. If we plead forgetfulness or inadvertency, it will only make the matter worse by offering to mend it. He is the most ungrateful of all, says the moral philosopher, who forgets either the benefactor or the benefit. And yet, when we have made the best we can of an ill cause, 'tis certain, that the true if not the only reason, why we are insensible of our ingratitude, is, because we seldom call to mind, and almost quite forget, how great our obligation is to love our God because he first loved us.

All the ends of the world, says the psalmist, *shall remember, and be converted to God*, Psal. xxii. 28. Let us remember only what a friend God is; how infinitely better than the best we have besides: let us remember only this, and we shall be converted: we shall be ashamed of our ingratitude, and love him above all things.

SECT. III.

That the Love of God is our greatest Good.

WHATEVER our duty is, the very word commandment is always odious to those who love their liberty, and makes it so much harder to go down with them. But yet, if after second thoughts upon the matter, we discover that one reason, why it is our greatest obligation, is, because it is our greatest good; the *yoke* will then seem *easy*, and the *burthen light*, Mat. xi. 30.

Three things there are which gain our hearts, command our inclinations, and in a manner govern all our actions; and these three things are, honor, profit and pleasure. Whatsoever we call good, falls under one of these three heads; 'tis either honorable, profitable, or delightful. All these three accompany the love of God, and none of them are ever to be found without it.

1. To begin with honor: I take for granted no man ought to judge that this or that is honorable, because the generality of mankind by mistake are apt to value and admire it; but before he gives his verdict, every man should first consider well the merits of the cause. A wise man, though he lived amongst a number of infidels, and saw how much they honor and adore false Gods, would not therefore presently conclude such idols honorable; but would rather laugh at those who are so blind, as not to see how little they deserve it. The question is not, what we by a vulgar error, are inclined

to honor most, but, what it is that is most worthy of it; and this upon a strict enquiry will appear to be the love of God; honor, at all hands, is agreed to be a testimony of some excellence; and nothing can be truly honorable if it be not truly excellent. A man has no just title to honor any more than what the common duties of civility require, unless he have something in him more than ordinary, some perfection to distinguish him, and raise him to a height more elevated than the low rank of men.

The qualities which justly challenge men's esteem, are wisdom, justice, power, and whatsoever raises us to the perfection of our nature. As for wisdom, S. Thomas of Aquine has demonstrated, that no man can be truly wise, who does not love God above all things. He may be, says he, a wise merchant, or a wise pilot, a wise statesman, or a wise general; because he may be prudent in the choice of proper means, well fitted to the purpose and design of such employments; but it is impossible to be a wise man, without being wise in order to the proper end of man, the great design of his creation, which is nothing but the knowledge and the love of God. A magistrate, who is created merely for the public peace, whatever he may be in other things, if he be not wise in order to that end, cannot be called a wise magistrate. And since we were all created to be happy and everlastingly united with God whatever we may be in other affairs, if we be not wise in order to this end, we may indeed affect wisdom, but must renounce all pretensions to the name of a truly wise man.

As for justice, I would gladly know how any man is thoroughly and truly just, who is perpetually guilty of the most notorious injustice imaginable.

Such is the man, whoever he be, who does not love his maker as he ought. 'Tis true, he only is unjust to God; he only wrongs himself; he never wronged his neighbour perhaps during his life. But what excuse could we make for a steward who only cheats his master? Would you think him a just man, because he never cheats his fellow-servants?

As for power: I confess it may be great in some particular respects, but never can be absolute without the love of God. I may say the same of power that St. Thomas says of wisdom. A man without this love may be a powerful prince, a powerful warrior, or the like; because, without it he may have all power necessary for the main design of government, or war, &c. But since without this love he neither can command his passions nor himself, it is evident he has not all the power necessary to attain the proper end of man's creation. In a word, he cannot be called powerful who is not master of himself.

Thus you may plainly see, how these three characters of wise, just and powerful, which are the most esteemed and honored in the world, are only shadows and imperfect semblances, if separated from the love of God. You plainly see, that it not only is the greatest excellence of man, most honorable, most deserving our esteem; but that without it, there is no other thing which truly is so.

2. As it is our greatest honor so it is our greatest profit. St. Paul was so sensible of this, that though the fervor of his zeal appears in all his writings, yet he never speaks with greater emphasis, than when he has a fair occasion to discourse upon this subject. *Though I speak*, says he, *with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.*

And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. He has reckoned up the greatest gifts and best advantages that he could call to mind, and yet he says they are all nothing to our purpose without love. On the other side, the same apostle teaches us, that all things else are profitable with it, though they never can be so without it. *We know*, says he, *that to them that love God, all things work together unto good*, Rom. viii. 28. The secret of changing all things into gold, has in vain long time been sought for; but the mystery of changing the meanest of our actions into more than gold, is much more easy to be found, *Whatsoever ye do*, says St. Paul, *do all to the glory of God*, 1. Cor. x. 31. and every thing you will do, will have more value in his sight, than all the gold and silver in the world. The last degree of love, the coldest act of charity, even the giving a cup of cold water for the love of God, our Saviour tells us, *shall in no wise lose its reward*. Matt. x. 42. So true is that of St. Austin. All things else are profitable with it; nothing else is truly so without it.

3. As it is our greatest profit, so it is our greatest pleasure; there is nothing so delightful, even in this world, as to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind. It is hard enough, I know, to make the world believe it; because, although the truth be in itself, as clear and bright as the meridian sun, our passions raise a cloudy mist before our eyes, which intercepts the sight of it. All persons whose affections are fixed upon

the pleasures of this world, can hardly ever be persuaded, but that the love of God is the dullest and the most insipid thing imaginable. They easily conceive, that nothing is so honorable as to be a saint; and that it is but a very little profit for a man *to gain the world, and lose his soul.* Matt. xvi. 26. The honor and the profit are agreed upon, but where is the pleasure? All that can be said upon this subject, they are unacquainted with, they understand it not. He preaches in an unknown tongue, who preaches the love of God to those who never loved him. The language of love, says St. Bernard, is barbarous to those who love not.

As soon as ever they begin to turn their back upon these rotten pleasures, and look towards heaven, presently these darlings of their heart, begin as it were to pull them by the sleeve, as St. Austin words it, and whisper in their ear, will you then forsake us? And from this moment shall we have your company no more for ever? Shall we never see you more? Thus they solicit, thus they importune, and tempt them to defer the time of their conversion. Do you think it possible to live without the pleasures of this world? Ah christians! it is not impossible; it is the greatest pleasure in the world to live without them. It is true, the very thoughts of separation are like thoughts of death: but then we ought to reflect, that as we feel no bodily pain when we are dead, but all our pain is only whilst we are dying: so we feel the pain of leaving worldly pleasures, whilst we are deliberating what to do; but we are dead to them, and feel no pain at all, when once we are resolved upon it. *You are dead*, says St. Paul to the Colossians, Col. iii. 3. *and your life is hidden with Christ in God. I am dead*, says the same apostle to the Galatians, Gal. ii. 19. 20. *and the life which*

I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me. See the powerful effects of love! It makes us insensible to all the pleasures of this world, as if our inclinations were already dead, and quite extinguished in us. Cant. viii. 6. *Love is as strong as death.*

It is this victorious love which frees us from the tyranny of all those passions which divide the kingdom of our heart: a kingdom *brought to desolation; where Satan casts out Satan; and how can this kingdom stand?* Matt. xii. 25, 26. How is there any true content and satisfaction to be found in it? A man who places all his happiness in humouring his passions, can never please himself, till he has pleased them all: and since it is impossible to please even two masters, how is it possible for any man to please so many? I might here appeal to each man's private conscience for a farther testimony of this truth; but, if a sullen conscience, even when it is upon the wrack, refuses to confess, we have the word of God, the best and clearest evidence we can desire: *The wicked*, says he, Isa. lvii. 20, 21. *are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt: there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked.*

On the other side, when once the love of God has full possession of our heart, when Christ governs it by faith, and the Holy Ghost by charity; when the spirit of God begins to *move upon the face of the waters*, Gen. i. 2. it presently *commands the winds and the sea*, Matt. viii. 20. and there succeeds a great calm. In a word, as much as liberty is more agreeable than slavery, as much as unity is better than division, as much as peace, content, and ease, are more delightful than perpetual disturbance, discontent, and pain, so much

the pleasure which attends the love of God, is greater than the pleasures of this world.

Had it been possible for our Creator to oblige us all to love him gratis, we might then have had a better excuse for our crime. And yet it would have been no more than what he very well deserves. He loved us gratis, without any possibility of recompence: he humbled himself to repair our honor; he quitted heaven to promote our interest; he suffered torments to procure our ease; and it would only be a suitable return, if we preferred his honor, interest and pleasure, far before our own. But, as our kind and gracious God has ordered it to our advantage, we are all obliged to seek our own true honor, interest and pleasure, and despise the false appearance of honorable, profitable and delightful, which the world endeavours to delude us with.

When we have made the most we can of such an obligation, it will amount to neither more nor less than what we daily see before our eyes. Consider how the ambitious, the covetous, and the voluptuous love their honors, riches, pleasures: is it not plain they love them above all things? And why should we not love God as well as worldlings love the world? They love it with all their heart, they desire nothing else, but to enjoy it; with all their soul, they have no passion for any thing else; with all their mind, they think of nothing else, but how to make a figure in it. Has God less charms than the world? Or is a flattering friend, well known to be our greatest enemy, more amiable than the best of friends, most true, most ancient, and most constant, who has always loved us better than we love ourselves? Is it a greater honor for a man to be the devil's slave than to be a favorite of God? Is it a greater profit to be cheated in the end than be eternally rewarded? or, are

those pleasures, which are always mixed with intervals of discontent, anxiety and pain, greater than those delights which are unchangeable, immortal, and divine; which, even in this vale of misery, begin our heaven upon earth? Ah christians! we have little reason to dispute the terms of such an obligation, where the whole advantage is entirely on our side: so great advantage, that we cannot truly love ourselves, unless we *love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind*, Mat. xxii. 38. This is not only our greatest duty but our greatest good.

SECT. IV.

That the Love of God is the chief Grace of the Holy Ghost.

I *AM come*, says our Saviour, *to send fire on the earth*, Luke xii. 22. *and what do I desire, but that it may be kindled?* This he desires; for this he came, and this we pray for, in the service of the church: come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love.

The Holy Ghost came visibly at first, and proved his presence by the miracles he performed. But yet a spirit is not naturally sensible; and when he comes invisibly, he comes more like himself; nor have we any reason, when he dwells within us, to suspect that he is less at home, because he less appears abroad. Although we do not see the fire descend, and rest upon our heads; yet, if the love of God inflame us, if it burn within our hearts, if it appear in our devotion, in our conversation, in our actions, it is enough, we then may hope we have received the Holy Ghost, and that our Saviour verifies in us his promise, which he made us, when he said, *he shall be in you*, John xiv. 17. He did not come into the world to visit the apostles only, and abandon their posterity: our Saviour did not

send him to us, that he might immediately forsake us, but that he might remain with us for ever, to the end of the world. *I will pray my Father,* says he, *that he may abide with you for ever.* John xiv. 16.

The spirit of God shall be in us. It is a solemn promise of our Saviour himself; we cannot doubt of it, although we cannot but admire it with profound astonishment, like that of Solomon, *Will God dwell* with us *on the earth*, 1 Kings iii. 8. 27. Will the Spirit of God not only dwell here with us, but within us? *If heaven cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built?* If we find, that Solomon was thus transported when he looked upon his temple, and compared it with the majesty of God, for whom he built it, may not we admire much more the living temple of the Holy Ghost? If the heaven of heavens cannot contain the spirit of God, how much less this despicable house of clay? Can we imagine, that this little heart of ours is more capacious than heaven? Or, can our heart contain our God if heaven cannot? certainly not: our God is infinite; he cannot be contained in either, and yet he dwells in both. Hear the psalmist, *To thee I lift up my eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens,* Psal. cxxii. 1. Hear St. Paul; *You are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you,* 1 Cor. iii. 16. Compare both testaments, the old and new, and if you seriously believe them both, conclude we have the same assurance that God dwells in virtuous souls as that he dwells in heaven.

The kingdom of God is within you, Luke xvii. 21. Wheresoever majesty resides the court is there; and wheresoever the king governs there his kingdom is. If the Almighty govern all the passions, motions, and affections of our souls; if once he be the sovereign monarch of our hearts; if

the love of God give law to all our inclinations, the Holy Ghost is then as truly in us as the king is in his kingdom, and he is no otherwise in heaven. This is that heaven upon earth which none can understand, but those devout and pious souls, who by experience *taste* and *see* how sweet God's kingdom is, where Christ governs by faith, and the Holy Ghost by charity; or, as St. Austin says, whose king is truth, whose law is love.

A spirit, having no proportion with place, if we believe philosophers, is neither here, nor there, nor any where of itself; but only by its operation in a body, which is in some place. When angels formerly appeared with airy bodies, they were truly and substantially present in those human forms, which they inhabited by operating there. Whatever the airy body seemed to do, the angel truly did, the angel moved, the angel walked, the angel spoke, discoursed, conversed with men. The Holy Ghost is likewise truly and substantially present in the soul of a devout and pious christian. He dwells in his heart by operating there; his heart becomes a paradise on earth: The *love of God*, now planted in the *middle* of it, is the *tree of life*, Gen. ii. 9. The Holy Ghost himself becomes the angel-guardian of the place, and like the cherubim, defends it with a *flaming sword*, Gen. iii. 24. He gives him life, *We live by the spirit*, Gal. v. 25. He gives him motion, *We walk by the spirit;* He gives him speech, *'Tis not you that speak*, says our Saviour to his apostles, *but the spirit of God that speaks in you*, Mat. x. 20.

So far you see the parallel betwixt the presence of an angel dwelling in an airy body, and the presence of the holy Ghost inhabiting in us. There is only this difference. Philosophers are puzzled to explain the virtue and the operation by which an angel moves the body it assumes; but Christians,

by the light of faith, have this advantage over them; they plainly read, and understand in Scripture, that the virtue of the Holy Ghost, by which he moves and governs us, is charity; and, that the operation which he produces in us, and with us, is the love of God above all things. *God* the Holy Ghost *is charity*, 1 John iv. 8. He is the consubstantial love of God the Father and the Son. If charity inspire us, if the love of God direct us, govern us, and influence the principal designs and actions of our life, we then may reasonably hope, *we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 12.

That inclination which is predominant, and governs all the rest, is usually called the spirit of man. If this be love of the honors, riches and pleasures of this world, it is an ambitious, a covetous, a carnal, or, to speak them all at once, a worldly spirit. But if it be the love of God above all things, without any competition of creatures, it is a virtuous, a divine, a holy spirit: then it is that the *Love of God is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, the holy spirit which is given to us*, Rom. v. 5.

When St. Paul came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples there, he demanded of them, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* Acts xix. 1, 2. And in my opinion, it would not be amiss to put the like question to Christians of our age. You in whose minds Christ dwells by faith, does the holy Ghost dwell in your hearts by charity? Is your love suitable to your belief? Do you love God with the same love you believe he requires of you? Do you love him above all things? Is your greatest care to please your God? Your greatest grief to have displeased him? In all things which deserve deliberation, do you first consult his law, and make it the rule of all your actions? Examine

well the whole course of your life; your actions, words and intentions. What is it that employs your mind the most? What are the thoughts with which you close your eyes at night, and open them in the morning? Are they fixed upon the one thing necessary? Do they tend to heaven? Do all things else appear as vanity, and nothing in comparison of that? If so, you have received the Holy Ghost, the *spirit* of God, *whom the world cannot receive*, John xiv. 17. But if the ruling inclination of your hearts be love of honors, riches and pleasures; if your greatest grief and trouble be disappointment in not succeeding in these trifles; if upon all occasions you consult your own inclinations and the maxims of the world, you then may answer as the Ephesians did: Alas! we are but little acquainted with this Holy Spirit; we have scarce heard of him, we know not what he is: we are better acquainted with the spirit of the world; as for the spirit of God he is a stranger to us. We say our prayers, we frequent the sacraments, we are in the common road of customary duties; but our ambitious spirit, our impatient love of honor is such, that we are more concerned for an affront than for a mortal sin: our avaricious spirit, our insatiable love of riches is so violent, that we had rather hazard the loss of all that heaven we pretend to, than expose the worldly treasure we possess: our carnal spirit, our incontinent love of pleasure is so passionate, that we had rather quit our right to all eternal joys above, than any way deny ourselves the empty satisfaction we seek for here below: in short, we love this world so much, that if we might but always have it at command, it is all we ask, we wish no more; *we have received the spirit of this world*, 1 Cor. ii. 12.

I hope I am pardoned, if I am a little importunate in pressing home this question; *Have you received*

the Holy Ghost? Acts xix. 2. Eternity depends upon it: your choice of heaven or hell; your being children of God or of the devil; your being saved or damned for ever: all this depends upon the answer to this necessary question. *As many as are led by the spirit of God,* says St. Paul, *they are the children of God,* Rom. viii. 16. Compute your actions, words and thoughts, from morning to night, from day to day: Is it the spirit of God that directs and leads you, or the spirit of this world? If the spirit of God, you are the children of God: if not, hear what the apostle says, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his,* Rom. viii. 9. He is not a brother of Christ, he is not an adoptive son of his eternal Father; he has a father in hell, but none in heaven. Our Saviour plainly says, *If God were your Father, you would love me* above all things, John viii. 24. But because you do not, *you are of your father the devil.* ver. 44.

Let those who seek the things of the world, consider this and tremble. Let them not gaze in vain upon our Saviour ascending to his Father: let them be assured his Father is not theirs; and that as sure as he ascended to his Father in heaven so sure in due time, unless they seriously repent, shall they descend to theirs in hell.

This was the reason why our Saviour told the Jews, *Whither I go you cannot come,* John viii. 21. As if he would say, I go to my Father; if he were your Father also, then you might bear me company: but since you *have received the spirit of this world,* 1 Cor. ii. 12. and are governed by the spirit of your father the devil, so in due time you will follow him to hell; but it is impossible without sincere repentance you should ever follow me to heaven: *Whither I go you cannot come.* The Jews amazed to hear it, knew not what he meant. He told

them the reason: *I am from above*, says he, *I am not of this world*, John viii. 23. The spirit which governs all my actions is from above; it is not the spirit of this world; it is the spirit of my Father, therefore I go to him. But on the other side, *You are of this world.* You are led by the spirit of this world; and therefore, *Whither I go you cannot come.*

Let us not flatter and deceive ourselves with the vain appearances of superficial piety which float upon the surface of our souls; but sound the very bottom of our hearts, and be assured, that if we find them chiefly fixed upon this world or any creature in it, we may stand gazing with the men of Gallilee, we may contemplate and admire the ascension of our Saviour, but all in vain; all this will be no advantage to us: whither he goes we cannot follow him. We cannot ascend, unless we first receive the Holy Ghost; nor can we receive him unless we first prepare for his reception.

SECT. V.

That we ought to prepare our Hearts for this Grace.

WHEN our Saviour was upon the point of leaving his apostles, after he had been forty days discoursing with them concerning the kingdom of God, the last and most important thing he recommended to their care was, that they should prepare themselves for the receiving of the Holy Ghost. *He commanded them, that they should not depart from* Jerusalem, *but wait for the promise of the Father*, Acts i. 4.

Prepare your hearts, says the prophet, *prepare your hearts to God, and serve him only, and he will deliver you*, 1 Sam. vii. 3. Prepare your hearts to entertain the Holy Ghost, or else you never will receive him. Prepare materials for *the temple of*

the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19. His temple is not to be built and finished in a day: we must have time to carry on the work, and more than ordinary preparations must be made: *With all my might*, says the royal prophet, *I have prepared for the house of my God:* because, says he, *the work is great, and the palace is not for man, but for God*, 1 Chron. xxix. 1, 2.

Our hearts have been profaned with idols: our ambition, avarice and lust have had their several altars in it; and from time to time, according as occasion served, have offered sacrifice to honors, riches and pleasures. Such a temple, so profaned, must be demolished, and a new one built upon its ruins. *Make yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit*, says the prophet, Ezek. xviii. 31. Although it be God's work, it is not only his but also ours. As much as lies in us, we must co-operate and labor with him: and the more difficult it is the more industriously we must endeavour to effect it. With all our might, with all our industry and diligence, we must prepare our heart, that it may be a temple of the Holy Ghost.

O that we had but wings like a dove, the wings of that dove, which once descended visibly upon our Saviour, *then should we fly away, and be at rest*, Psal. liv. 7. Our hearts should fly away from all things in this world, and repose sweetly in heaven. If once the love of God inflame our hearts with ardent and continual desires of being happy with him, we shall find, that these desires are wings by which our hearts aspire and mount to heaven. But if the love of any thing in this world bind us to the earth, we then shall find that our celestial desires are clogged with earthly passions; and although we now and then, with a faint sigh, look up to heaven, yet a stronger-inclination will always bear us down to the earth. He who is

wholly disengaged from all the charms of a deluding world alone enjoys true liberty. St. Austin says, the wings of his soul are free; but if his heart be any way ensnared with any other love, he then has birdlime in his wings; he cannot fly away and be at rest.

The apostles themselves were not prepared for the receiving of the Holy Ghost, as long as they were satisfied with being happy in our Saviour's company on earth. If any satisfaction here below could innocently challenge so much place in their affections, surely innocence itself descending down from heaven had the best and clearest title to their love. And yet as long as they were of St. Peter's mind, and thought with themselves. *'Tis good for us to be here*, Mat. xvii. 4. it is good to make our tabernacle here; so long we find they were unfit for the reception of the Holy Ghost. *I tell you the truth*, says our Saviour, *'tis expedient for you that I go away*, John xvi. 7. because you love me with so little resignation, and are so unwilling that I should leave you; therefore it is expedient for you that I now ascend, to raise your hearts above the world, and carry them to heaven with me. If I go not away your love will creep upon the earth, the spirit of the world will still possess your hearts, the spirit of God will find no habitation there. *The comforter will not come.* But *if I depart*, if I whom you so dearly love ascend, your minds and hearts will follow me to heaven, they will be raised above the reach of all things in this world, the spirit of the world will have no dwelling there; you then will be prepared for the receiving of the Holy Ghost; and when you are so, *I will send him to you.*

When the Holy Ghost came, he *filled all the house where they were sitting*, Acts ii. 2. Wheresoever he comes he fills the house, he takes it all to

himself: and it is no wonder, being infinite, he takes up so much room. As God would cease to be immense, if there were any corner of the world in which he is not present; so the Holy Ghost would cease to be our infinite and sovereign good, if any corner of our heart have any thing lodged in it that excludes him. When once we have received the Holy Ghost, our heart is the kingdom of God. He is the absolute and only monarch that commands it; he cannot alienate the least part of his title to the government; he cannot any way admit of a companion in his throne. Our heart is the throne of the most high: and if we remember what became of Lucifer, I hope it will suffice to make us sensible, how dangerous a thing it is to place a creature in the throne of God, and make it *like the highest*, Isa. xiv, 14.

St. Austin wondering at the overflowing measures of God's holy spirit in the apostles' hearts, observes, that the reason why they were so full of God, was because they were so empty of his creatures: they were very full, says he, because they were very empty; because they were so empty of the spirit of this world, therefore they were so full of the spirit of God.

O that our hearts were empty! O that they were purged and cleansed like theirs, from all inordinate affection to this world! We then should be prepared like them, and ready to receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost. It is a great work, and will require some time; why are we then so slow in undertaking it? *Why do* we *stand gazing?* Acts i. 11. we gaze, we lift up our eyes to heaven, but yet we stand; our feet are fixed upon the earth. We prefer heaven before hell, of the two we had rather be there; but of the three, if it were possible we had rather be always here.

How long will you love vanity? says the

psalmist, Ps. iv. 2. This world is nothing else but vanity: how long will you love it? it is *vanity and vexation of spirit*, Eccles. iv. 16. How long will you delight in it. It flies before you like a shadow. How long will you run after it? Alas! it is but a shadow if you overtake it. *The world passes away*, 1 John iv. 17. It is an unkind ill-natured world which passes by us with a flattering smile, and will not stay a moment with us. If it had ever been a true and faithful friend to any man, we should have some pretence to justify our expectation of its being kind; but since we know, it never was so to its greatest favorites, we may be sure, it never will be so to us. The time will come when we shall plainly see, although perhaps too late, that all is vanity; and we shall love no more what we are now so fond of. The love of all those trifles, with which our infancy was once so much pleased, is now forgotten; and we so much contemn those childish entertainments, that unless we saw the same in other children, we should scarce believe we ever loved them. As when we advance in years we see the folly of our childhood; so upon our death-bed we shall as plainly see the folly of our life: we shall then discover that the honors, riches, and pleasures of this world are only so many serious trifles, which are therefore more ridiculous because more serious. When once the period of our dissolution approaches; when we are upon the borders of eternity; when we are, as it were, betwixt two worlds, the end of this and the beginning of the next, which never will have end; then it is that all our joys will begin to vanish out of sight; they will be the same to us as if they never had been present; then it is, that all our miseries will come in view, such miseries as never can be past, but

will for all eternity be always present: when once that hour comes, we shall be wise enough to undervalue and contemn what we now so dearly love; but then I fear we shall be wise too late; our useless wisdom will not rise in judgment for us but against us. O let us now endeavour to be wise, and disengage our hearts from all inordinate affection to this world; that we may be prepared for the receiving of this grace, which is the best and surest pledge of the eternal glory which we hope for in the world to come.

MOTIVES OF FEAR.

SECT. I.

How much it imports us to remember the Day of Judgment.

WHEN the disciples asked our Saviour, what would be the *sign of his coming*, and *of the end of the world*, Matt. xxiv. 3. Our Saviour answered, that the day and hour were not to be known before-hand; that his coming would be like a flash of lightning when they least expected him. *Therefore*, says he, *be ready; for in the hour you think not, the Son of man will come, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* The world shall have an end. The Son of man shall come to judge the world. The hour of his coming shall surprize us when we least think of it. If we knew before-hand we should certainly prepare. And we have much more reason since we do not know it.

But, alas! our Saviour Jesus Christ himself has prophesied, that *As in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marry-*

ing, and giving in marriage, till the day that Noah *entered the ark, and knew not, till the flood came and took them all away; so also shall be the coming of the Son of man.* He told us how it would be, and every day we see how true it is. We mind nothing but eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; we seek for nothing but diversion, sport, and pastime; we now rejoice; but then, when the world ends, our joys will end with it; then we shall grieve, and not only then but for ever. *Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn,* Mat. xxiv. 30.

Then shall all mourn. Not all the just; not all God's friends; not all devout and pious christians, who not only in their baptism but also during life, renounced the vanities and pleasures of this world. All these will have just reason to abound with joy at the approach of their so long desired and everlasting happiness: *They sowed with tears,* but now *shall reap with joy,* Ps. cxxvi. 5.

All the tribes of the earth, all those whose hearts were always fixed upon the earth, upon the honors, riches and pleasures of the earth; they shall all mourn, and not without sufficient reason: for, 1. they shall see the fatal end of all their transitory happiness. 2. They shall see the sad beginning of their everlasting misery.

SECT. II.

That our last Day is the fatal End of all our transitory Happiness.

AS on the one side nothing can be truly little which is infinite; so on the other nothing can be truly great which has an end. *Our God is great,* says the prophet, Baruch iii. 25. *and has no end.* As if he had a mind to let us understand, that God himself, with all his other attributes,

would be but little if he had one; that all this world is therefore inconsiderable, and that the next is therefore to be valued above all things, because it is a world without end. This is the common misery attending all our happiness, that what is past is nothing; what we enjoy at present is but one poor moment; and that which is to come is every moment less and less, approaching nigher to the final period of its future being which is nothing.

The very thoughts of this is so afflicting, that it puts a stop to all our joys, and makes us miserable in the full career of our felicity: we need no more to damp our spirits in the midst of our enjoyments, than the importunity of this unwelcome thought; all this will shortly have an end. The paradise of our first parents would have been to them no paradise at all, had they foreseen the end of it. And when God pleased to forbid the eating of the fatal fruit, he seemed to judge, that nothing could be more effectual to keep them in their duty than to let them know that death should put an end to all, if ever they presumed to eat of it. As it was then their chief and only comfort to survey the vast extent and great variety of their delights, and at the same time confidently say, all this is ours for ever if we please; so it had been impossible for any artifice of the malicious serpent to surprise them, or prevail upon them, if he had not flattered them with some assurance that they should not die; but still be truly happy, that is, happy without end.

The devil does not now pretend to persuade us that we shall not die: he knows it would be impossible to impose so notorious a cheat upon us. But yet, for fear lest we should undervalue all the vain allurements of a miserable world, he whispers in our ear we shall not die so soon: he

has not the impudence to tell us that the world will never end, but that it will not end so soon as we imagine: *Thou hast many goods*, says the rich man in the gospel, *laid up for many years*, Luke xii. 19.

This is in short the sum of our felicity on earth. The happiest man that ever lived could say no more than this. He could not say that he had all which he desired; he could not but observe, by sad experience, that he was still unsatisfied, and that his small possessions were nothing in comparison with his great desires. Nor could he say, that what he had would always be his own: he could not but be well acquainted with the truth of what man is; he daily dies; he every moment is upon his journey to the grave: *he wastes away, gives up the ghost, and where is he?* Job xiv. 10. However, he might say, to comfort his insatiable soul, although thou hast not all that thou canst wish for thou hast many goods; and though thou canst not possibly enjoy them always, yet they are laid up for many years; thy palace is magnificent, thy entertainment splendid, thy attendance numerous, thy gardens are a paradise of pleasure and delight, thy honor equal to thy fortune, and thy power equal to both; the world admires, courts, and almost adores thee; is not this enough? thou hast many goods. And why should any melancholy apprehensions seize thy spirits, and disturb thy mind with fearful thoughts of loosing what thou hast? there is no danger whilst thou livest, and thou art in the flower of thy age, just ripe for pleasure, healthy, vigorous, and like to live these many years: and what hast thou to do, but *take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry*, Luke xii. 19. as if thou wert to live for ever?

Behold, the best that we can make of the most happy state we hope for here. We dare not look

before us, lest we see the end of all our joys: we blindly doat upon these darlings of our passions, and endeavour to forget the misery of their mortality and ours. We are not able to support a serious thought of our perpetual decay; and though we love ourselves above all things, yet we hate the very sight of our condition; we cannot endure to look into ourselves; and as an idle solitude is ever troublesome, because we love no company so little as our own; so the great reason why the company of any other person is so pleasing, is, because it hinders us from thinking of ourselves.

The greatest and most happy man, whose heart is fixed upon this world, would soon be melancholy if he had but leisure to reflect, that every moment leads him to the end of his happiness. The doleful prospect of a future separation is so terrible, that he endeavours all he can to think of nothing farther than the present. All the busy agitation of his mind, the exercises of his body, and the pastimes of his conversation, are delightful to him, chiefly upon this account, because they are diversions; that is, because they fix his mind upon the present moment, and divert him from the melancholy thought, that all his happiness must have an end.

If the bare thought of our approaching dissolution be so doleful, even at a distance, where uncertainty gives room to make the most we can of our felicity; if, I say, the very thought of it be so afflicting, what will the presence of it be, when with our own eyes we shall see that fatal moment which now we are so much afraid to think of? We now are merry and rejoice, because we banish from us the uneasy apprehension: but then, all those who will be sad spectators of this doleful scene, will be no longer able to divert themselves from thinking of the misery they see before them,

Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn. Matt. xxiv. 30.

To close the dying eyes of a friend whom we dearly love, is apt to move our tears, although our other friends, who yet survive are still remaining to comfort us. But when their dearest friend, the world itself begins to die; when all their comfort at once forsakes them; when the sun and moon grow dark, and the expiring world begins to close its eyes, then they shall all mourn.

When once that dismal day is come, which the prophet Sophonias calls the *great day of the Lord, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness, a day of tribulation and distress,* i. 15. When cataracts of fire shower down upon their heads, as if the stars themselves fell from the firmament: when in the last convulsions of its mortal agony the earth trembles, and hell itself lies gaping under their feet: then they shall plainly see the meaning of that vision in the Revelations, x. 5, 6, which represents an angel standing with one foot upon the raging sea, another on the trembling land, *lifting his hand to heaven, and swearing by him that lives for ever, time shall be no more.*

Poor miserable wretches. There was once a time, when honors, dignities and titles, recommended them to the admiring world, whose eyes were dazzled with the glory of their greatness: they were followed, waited on, and celebrated in their generation: but now, alas! they shall be so no more. There was a time when they abounded in the overflowing measure of their wealth; their palaces were sumptuous, and all things suitable to the aspiring height of their ambition: but now, no more; their great magnificence is buried in the ruins of the world; their gold and silver melted down into the earth, from whence it came; and

all their pride lies levelled with the common dust, to which all things return. There was a time, when all the sinful pleasures of the world attended them; when they denied their passions nothing that they asked, when they had full command of all that they desired, and rather cloyed, than satisfied their brutal appetites: but now, no more. Their honor, riches, pleasures, are all at an end: their time is at an end: their time shall be no more.

When, as it happens frequently amongst the various accidents of human life, we are deprived of some particular enjoyment which we passionately love; though we lament and grieve, yet we have still some comfort left: it is not a total deprivation of all that we enjoy: the damage is supported by some other pleasures and conveniences. If one friend die, our other friends survive. If one forsake us, we may find another faithful to us. Or, if they all abandon us yet our misfortune is not universal: we have always something left, which we can think upon without affliction, and repose our wearied thoughts. He that is dangerously sick of one or two diseases, is not at the same time sick of all the rest. Whatever his condition is, he always has some hopes of being better: and although these hopes are very little, they are still some little comfort to a man in misery. But, when this dreadful day is come, which puts an end to time, it puts an end to all their hopes; all that they ever loved, or now desire, abandons them; their inclinations are more lively than they ever were, and all are disappointed. Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn to see the fatal end of all their transitory happiness. But, alas! this is not all: they shall have much more reason to lament and grieve when at the same time they behold the sad beginning of their everlasting misery.

SECT. III.

That our last Day is the sad Beginning of our everlasting Misery.

WE have seen the dreadful symptoms of an agonizing world; the terrible convulsions of expiring nature, and the final end of all that sinners love with so much passion: an end of all ambition, avarice and pleasure; an end of all honors, riches and amours; an end of political designs, of ancient families, of nuptial joys; an end of idle conversation, balls and plays; an end of beauty, wit and courage; an end of all feasting, drinking and diversion; an end of all mirth, delight and pastime: and, which of all things is most terrible to a despairing soul, an end of life, but not an end of the sinner; an end of pleasure, but not an end of pain; an end of time, but not of eternity, which will eternally begin and never have an end. After hundreds, thousands, millions, not of years, but of ages. If we may suppose that heaven and earth, with all that they contain, were changed into numeral figures; at the foot of the account, whatever it amounts to, you may find it written, here begins eternity. Moreover, if you multiply this number by itself, and by the same rule multiply its product, all is nothing compared to eternity; wherever this innumerable number ends, eternity begins.

If all be nothing to eternity, what will be the inconsiderable number of those years which sinners prodigally spend in sin? What will they then appear to be? Will they not seem incomparably less than nothing? And will not sinners then have too much reason to lament, that for so short a moment, so much less than nothing, they have forfeited the eternal joys of heaven, and incurred the everlasting pains of hell. *What doth it profit a*

man, says our Saviour, Luke ix. 25. *if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.* Alas! poor souls, what comfort is it to have gained the world and lost yourselves? To have lost all happiness, and gained, if I may call it gain, all misery, and all this for mere trifles.

What pains and by what means they are to suffer, is a question fitter for our curiosity than our edification. It is enough to know as much of hell as the apostle tells us of heaven, 1 Cor. ii. 9. *Neither the eye has seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive*, what unspeakable pains and torments the Almighty has prepared in the next life, for those who have in this offended him. It is enough, that God is certainly as just as he is God, and therefore infinitely just. It is enough that the enormity of sin, which he so patiently endures, is aggravated by the greatness of his majesty and therefore infinitely infinite. It follows evidently from hence, that all the most effectual and most proper means which God's great wisdom can invent, all that his justice, by the eternal rule of his decrees can exact, and all that his omnipotence, according to the rigor of the sentence can put in execution, will be employed to punish those who have offended him. It follows also, that it is as much impossible for any man to comprehend the great excess of those eternal pains, as it is to understand God's wisdom, justice, and omnipotence; all which are infinitely raised above the reach of human reason. However, we may easily conjecture something, by considering God's justice in this world, and judging thence, what it may be hereafter.

If the just themselves are so severely punished in this world, if it be true, as the psalmist says Ps. xxxiii. 20. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous;* if even God's friends who are so faith-

ful to him, undergo such punishments for little failings in their duty, what will become of his enemies, who forfeit all their title to his friendship by their grievous sins?

If in the days of overflowing mercy, which appears so eminently above all his works, he gave such signal instances of his avenging anger; if even when his pity, in a manner, held his hands, the fury of his wrath broke forth, and with an universal deluge laid the world so deep in water, that amongst so many millions, not a single sinner could escape: what will become of miserable sinners at the day of judgment, when the end of time shall put an end to all his goodness, all his kindness, all his mercy, and begin the triumph of eternal justice? When our God will be to us no longer patient, no longer kind, no longer merciful, but only just; eternally and infinitely just.

Our Saviour Jesus will not then appear as the physician and redeemer of our souls, but only as the judge of all our actions: and even to his friends at his right hand, he will not shew himself in any other quality; the very sentence of their happiness will be an act of justice only, not of mercy: our Lord, says the apostle, at that day will be a righteous judge. It is true it was nothing but the merciful assistance of his grace, which heretofore enabled them to fight, and finish well their course; but now in the rewarding of his friends according to his promise, he is no longer merciful, if we believe St. Paul, but only righteous and just.

If at that day he would be merciful to any, he would surely be so to his friends: and since the best and most faithful of all his servants find no mercy at their trial, can his enemies expect it? It is called the day of judgment, to distinguish it from all these other days of mercy: and, if in these he showered down fire from heaven, it is no

wonder, if in those the stars themselves will seem to fall: if Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed, it is easy to believe, that then the earth will all of it be laid in ashes. But, alas ! this universal deluge of devouring fire, together with the darkness of the sun and moon, the roarings of the sea, and howlings of the wind and air; all this is but a prelude to the misery of sinners: this is only the beginning of their sorrows. This is nothing but their summons to appear before the bar: and, it is the dreadful apprehension of their judgment and damnation, which torments them with agonizing fear.

There was a time when life was sweet; but now they hate it. There was once a time, when the despair of living was their greatest pain; but now the scene is changed, and the despair of dying is incomparably more tormenting. *In those days*, says the beloved disciple, Rev. ix. 6. *Men shall seek death, and shall not find it; they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them.* There was a time when sinners laughed at all the fears and apprehensions of this day, but now the time of laughing will be past; nor will it be, as Solomon calls it, a time to mourn: it will not be a time, but an eternity to mourn.

Then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn. Not only those, who whilst they lived, were thought to carry visibly the mark of reprobation in their foreheads; but also such as lived great saints in the esteem of men, and died great sinners in the sight of God, shall then desire to die again, and seek for an eternal death, and shall not find it. Then shall their concealed abominations, all their shameful actions, all their secret works of darkness, come to light. Then nothing shall be covered, nothing so industriously hid, but what shall

be revealed to all the world. Not only those who took such care to hide their sins from others, but even those who formerly were used to hide them from themselves shall clearly see the malice of their palliated crimes: *Then they shall see, and then they shall mourn*, Mat. xxiv. 30.

We now are willing to live peaceably and quietly within ourselves; we do not much delight in the remorses of a guilty mind; and therefore, we contrive some kind of conscience for every thing we do.

We are uneasy at the thought of everlasting pains; and therefore if we ever take ourselves to task, we rake together all we can to make a favorable judgment of our state. As the examen rather is designed to please ourselves than God, it is generally very superficial. We look upon our actions all in gross, without enquiring much into the drift and chief design of them. We look upon the outward shew; the approbation and esteem of men; the example of some who pass for good and virtuous, and yet have often done the same as we do: our being free as we suppose from many faults, which we observe not in ourselves; our great abhorrence of some certain sins which we observe in others: our being punctually and religiously precise in some small matters, some exterior mortification, some particular devotions which we take a fancy to: and thus we frame a false idea of the miserable state we shall be found in when we come before the bar. We now are proud, and willing to excuse ourselves; but then the testimony of our clearer sighted conscience will confound and humble us. Our passions blind us now; we see not what we truly are: but then the sun of justice will arise, and scatter all the darkness which conceals us from ourselves. The

piercing rays, the all-discovering beams of truth will break like lightening through the clouds of our affected ignorance, when once the Son of man appears to judge the world.

If there were any possibility of cheating his all-seeing wisdom; of calling back the time of his indulgent mercy, or escaping from the hands of his Almighty power: were there any possibility of this, or were there any friend from whom the guilty might expect the least assistance, it would be some little comfort.

They had once a true and faithful friend who dearly loved them; came from heaven to instruct them, and conduct them thither; lived a painful and laborious life amongst them; and although neglected, scorned, and persecuted by them, yet continued constant in his love, and to redeem them, paid their ransom with the price of his own blood. But now their best and only friend becomes their greatest enemy. He loved them once: but love so long neglected and so much abused is now quite changed into a mortal and eternal hatred. He invited all of them to come to him, whenever they had need of his assistance, Mat. xi. 28. *Come to me all you that labor:* but now, alas! it is too late to come: his patience now is abused; and in the fury of his everlasting indignation, he for ever banishes them from him, Mat. xxv. 41. *Go from me ye accursed.* Go ambitious souls and leave your honorable titles all behind you; go and seek what preferments you can find amongst the *devil and his angels.* Go insatiable misers; go and take possession of that misery which you have purchased with the loss of your beloved treasure: go voluptuous wretches; you who formerly have wished your flames might ever burn: go now and burn for ever in the everlasting flames of hell.

Behold the dreadful sentence we must all expect, unless we follow his advice, who then will be our judge, Luke xxi. 36. *Watch therefore,* says he, *and pray always; that you then may be accounted worthy to escape, and stand before the Son of man.* Alas! our dear Redeemer takes no pleasure in condemning us. No man, says St. Austin, who designs to strike us, bids us have a care. Our Saviour often warns us, often calls upon us, often bids us have a care. St. Paul exhorts us in his name, Rom. xiii. 11. *It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep:* it is now the hour to go with tears of repentance to the throne of grace; that then we may appear with confidence and joy before the great tribunal of his justice: it is now the hour to hearken to him, Matt. xi. 28. *Come to me all you that labor;* that then we may be sure to hear him call us to him, Mat. xxv. 34. *Come ye blessed;* come and reap the fruit of all your labors; come, and take possession of those everlasting joys, which were *prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Amen.

MOTIVES OF HOPE.

SECT. I.

How unreasonable a Thing it is for any Sinner to despair.

THE greatest mystery of christian morality, consists in the equal balancing of hope and fear, betwixt God's mercy and his justice; that we may neither be secure in sin, because he is merciful; nor yet despond because he is just. Pre-

sumption and despair are the two rocks, betwixt which all christians ought to steer an even course; and in such manner avoid the one as not to dash against the other. It is perhaps the greatest secret of the devil's art. He first inclines us to presume; and we no sooner see the danger of it, but he tempts us to despair. Thus he commences; thus he finishes his work.

I must confess the greatest part of mankind being so insensible, so stupid, so immersed in worldly cares and pleasures, is enough to justify the pious zeal of those who frequently proclaim the menaces of an offended majesty, and with the formidable noise of hell, damnation and everlasting torments, labor to awake and rouse them from the lethargy of sin. But, when they are awake, and looking round about them, take a prospect of their miserable state; when every horrid crime appears in its own dreadful shape; when multitudes of past offences crowd into their minds, and overwhelm their heavy thoughts with a despairing expectation of no less than everlasting misery: Alas! poor souls, it is not now a seasonable time to magnify the motives of their fear. If ever comfort and encouragement were necessary to allay the pains and anguishes of a despairing soul: now is the time. What shall we say? Tell them they need not fear? Oh, no! the malice of their grievous sins is infinite; the danger of their lamentable state is greater than they can imagine: let but their hope be equal to their fear, they cannot fear too much. How then shall we encourage their expiring hope? I'll tell you how.

If God were only just, and were not also powerful and merciful, a sinner then might really despair: but when God's power and mercy both concur to comfort the desponding heart of an afflicted penitent, what can he wish for more?

There are but two conditions requisite to qualify the person upon whose assistance we depend, that we may safely hope, and with a loving confidence assure ourselves of his protection. The first is, that he can relieve us if he will: the second, that he will relieve us if we please. Will without power, signifies but little: power without will, signifies much less: but when they both meet in the person of a friend, to whom we always have a free access, who certainly can help us if he will, and no less certainly will help us if we please; then, let our present misery be ever so great, let the approaching danger of our future ruin every day seem greater, we may with trembling hearts expect the helping hand which can and will deliver us; but all our fear can never exclude our hope; it cannot rob us of that comfort, satisfaction and joy, which so much confidence in such a friend inspires.

If when a sinner struggles with his chains, endeavours to break lose; and the more he struggles, the more he finds himself engaged; which the all-seeing wisdom frequently permits to humble a proud soul: if then these two great truths were settled in his mind, to wit, that God can free him if he will, and that he will not fail to free him if he please: o! with what pleasure would he relish the assurance of this loving confidence? with how much transport of a joyful mind would he recite those words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. i. 12, *I know in whom I have believed;* I know in whom I put my trust; I know, and am persuaded, he is able to deliver me. I am assured, he is not only powerful but merciful; and therefore, I am certain, he both can and will assist me.

SECT. II.

That God can help us if he will.

THE divinity and the power of God are so much the same that no man can deny the one and own the other. There is no truth so evident in which the world so universally agrees, as God's omnipotence. Every body knows that nothing is impossible to God. It is one of the first truths which a philosopher demonstrates, or a Christian believes. Almighty is his name, the name we know him by, the name he answers to whenever we call upon him.

What need I then discourse upon a truth which every body knows? The reason is because although we know it well enough, we very seldom think of it.

We all know nothing is impossible to God; and that the lamentable state of a poor sinner cannot be so desperate, but that he can retrieve him. And yet how little do we think of this when we are tempted to despair? Do we not then behave ourselves as if we doubted of it? I am afraid that at the best we pray like him of whom St. Mark makes mention, ix. 20. Lord, if *thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.* I fear we often are incredulous, and have just reason to repeat with tears his humble prayer, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

If David, that great saint, 1. Sam. xiii. 14. *according to God's heart,* who looking back to take a view of all his past iniquities, saw at a distance only some few sins which he had long since washed away with penitential tears; if he could scarce support the terror of that melancholy prospect, as he says himself, Ps. xxxvii. and *all day long went mourning* for his sins: if his heart

panted and his strength failed him : if he had no rest, because he was over-head in his iniquities, which like a heavy burthen were too heavy for him ; if he, I say, were thus perplexed with fear, and almost ready to despair of his salvation ; have not I just cause to apprehend much more the danger of such doubts in greater sinners who are almost surfeited with sin before they seriously begin to look behind them, and compute the terrible arrears of all their past offences?

I must confess the difficulties which occur in the conversion of a sinner are insupportable, if compared to the weak strength of our corrupted nature ; and if the possibility of working our salvation be considered only with regard to human frailty, there appears no hope of compassing so great a work, such is the ignorance and blindness of our understanding ; such is the malice and perverseness of our will ; our inclinations are so prone to liberty ; and the restraint of our unreasonable humours so sensibly uneasy to us, that a thorough reformation of our lives is far above our single strength. Without the grace of God, we neither have the wisdom to contrive it, nor the courage to begin it, nor the power to perform it.

But yet this darkness of our reason, though we cannot of ourselves dispel it, may be dissipated by a lively faith in him, *who enlightens every man that comes into this world*, John i. 9. This depravation and corruption of our will, although it be to us alone impossible, may, by the sweet and forcible impulse of a powerful grace, be changed and rectified ; this obstinate rebellion of our appetite against the rule of reason and the precepts of a christian life, although we have often found ourselves unable to reduce it to the terms of just obedience, may easily be conquered by omnipotence.

If sin has so much blinded us that we can hardly see our danger: if the noise of worldly vanities has made us almost deaf to all good counsel: if the habit of our sins has lamed us so that we can scarcely move a foot towards heaven: if we are blind, deaf, lame, nay, even dead to God, and all that is good, and no person can be in a worse condition than this, all is still nothing compared to the powerful hand of God: such miracles as these were his familiar exercise on earth, Matt. xi. 5. *The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead are raised to life.* All this our God can easily perform in favor of us, whensoever he pleases.

Lord, if thou wilt, says the leprous man, *thou canst make me clean*, Matt. viii. 2. Let the diseases of a sinful soul be ever so inveterate, ever so deeply rooted in the heart, he clearly and distinctly comprehends the nature of them all; he knows exactly the proportion and virtue of his remedies, and all of them obey the word of his command, Matt. viii. 3. *I will*, says he, *be thou cleansed;* when once God says the word, the work is done, *immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

Create in me, o my God, create in me a clean heart, Ps. l. I ask not any thing but what is easy to thee. Alas! it is to me impossible: but thou, my God, canst do it with more ease than I can ask. Behold my misery with pity and compassion. Behold me indigent and naked, clothed with nothing but the horrid covering of my uncleanness. Behold me blind, deaf, lame; and almost dead with the contagious leprosy of sin, which covers me from head to foot, and has not left a sound part in me. Conscious of my unworthiness, after so long neglecting my condition, after so long confiding in my own weak strength, after so long despairing of my health, because I

thought I could do any thing, and found I could not cure myself; conscious, I say, of my unworthiness, I scarce pretend to ask for mercy: I only cast myself upon my knees and face prostrate before thy feet, exposing and laying open all my grievous distempers, which every one of them, though I am humbly silent, every one speaks loudly my necessities, and begs with all the moving eloquence of misery, thy pity and assistance. I know my sins provoke thy justice, whilst my misery appeals to thy Almighty power: but thy faithful servant David tells me, that the Israelites provoked thee also; and nevertheless, not for thy sake, but *for thy name's sake*, Ps. cvi. 8. Thou was pleased to *save them; that thou mightest make thy mighty power known.* This is the first foundation of my hope: I know the credit of thy power is engaged in their behalf, who trust entirely in it, firmly expect it, and depend upon it: and therefore in this posture, I present myself with loving confidence before thy feet, resolving there to expect with all humility and patience, when thou shalt please to cast an eye upon me, and either find the benefit of being cured, or which appears to me impossible, die in the hands of an omnipotent physician. Ah, my dear Jesus! this is all that I can do: and even this I cannot do without thy grace: but when I have done this, my comfort is, that thou canst do the rest: *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,* Matt. viii. 2.

Dear christians, let us pause a while, and with a serious attention, behold this leper at our Saviour's feet: behold the lively image of a sinner, and the perfect model of a penitent: behold both what we are and what we ought to be: in his disease we see our misery; in his behaviour we see our duty: in his disease we see the sad effects

of sin; we see the strong temptations and assaults of a most terrible despair: in his behaviour we see the fruits of true repentance: we see the victory of a triumphant hope, and the great comfort which attends a loving confidence in God's omnipotence.

O what a comfort it is to a humble penitent, to be assured, that as God gives him all he has, so he can give him all he wants! If we are almost quite oppressed with those drynesses and desolations of mind, which none can know but by experience; St. Paul tells us, 2 Cor. ix. 8. *God is able to make all grace abound in us:* If we labor under the perpetual violence of importunate temptations; St. Paul assures us, Heb. ii. 18. *God is able to succour those that are tempted:* if our temptations be so strong, and we so negligent, that after some resistance we relapse into our sins; if we rise again, and yet fall; if we renew our resolutions, and when we think ourselves most secure are surprized and fall again; St. Paul assures us, Rom. xiv. 4. *God is able to make us stand.* If having tried all ways we can imagine, we are at a loss and know not either what to think, or what to ask; the same saint tells us, Ephes. iii. 20. *God is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think.*

Is any thing too hard for God? Gen. xviii. 14. Can any thing be hard to him whose power is infinite, and whose will is equal with his power? 1 Sam. ii. 6. *Our Lord kills and makes alive; brings to the grave and raises up.* His power accompanies our souls as far as the gates of hell itself, and brings them back again. Although your soul, quite overgrown with sin, may be, perhaps, in the all-seeing eye of God, a much more horrid object than the foulest devil in hell; nevertheless, go confidently with the leper to our Saviour, crowd in amongst the multitudes that follow him; cast

yourself down upon your knees and face; say, with a truly contrite, truly humble heart, Mat. viii. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, then shall you hear him graciously return that comfortable answer; *I will; be thou clean.* Then shall you be transported with excess of joy, to find and feel the truth of what I now advance; to wit, that God not only can relieve us if he will, but also will relieve us if we please.

SECT. III.

That God will help us if we please.

ALTHOUGH God's power be the first foundation of our hope, his mercy always ready to assist us, is the principal, if not the only motive of it. This was the comfortable meditation with which the royal prophet counterbalanced all his fears, Ps. xiv. 3. *Thy mercy*, says he, *thy loving kindness is always before my eyes.* Without this comfort, he would never have supported the remorse of his conscience, his *sin was ever before him;* his continual apprehensions and frightful thoughts would certainly have driven him into a deep despair, had not God's *mercy always* been *before him.* The very thought of God revived his drooping spirits: he could not so much as think of him, without thinking of his mercy: to be God and to be merciful were to him one and the self same thing, Ps. lviii. 17. *My God is my defence*, says he, *and the God of my mercy.* If he lifted up his eyes to heaven with inflamed desires of being happy there; he adored that mercy which preserved the angels, and rewarded them with glory, Ps. xxxv. 6. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens.* If he looked down and took a prospect of this vale of miseries, he admired to see God's mercy stoop so low, to see it most appear

where there is most occasion for it, to see it superabound where sin abounds. Ps. xxxiii. 5. *The earth is full of his mercy.* If he looked before him, he beheld God's mercy starting first, preventing and forerunning all his good designs and enterprises, Ps. lix. 10. *His mercy will prevent me.* If he looked behind him, he beheld the selfsame mercy following him, promoting, carrying on, and perfecting his good endeavours, Ps. xxiii. 6. *His mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.* Which way soever he cast his eye, he saw himself defended and surrounded with God's mercy, himself the centre, mercy the circumference, Ps. xxxii. 10. *Him that trusts in God, mercy shall encompass about.* Thus did this saint, who once had been a sinner; thus did he comfort and encourage his afflicted soul, whenever the remembrance of his sins oppressed his mind: and thus may we in imitation of him. Thus may we also answer all the troublesome suggestions of our panic fears; confronting sin with grace, justice with mercy, fear with hope, and loving confidence in him, whose mercy still is infinite, and always will be so, Ps. c. 5. *His mercy is everlasting.* All this you will say is little comfort to a sinner, who is day and night beset with all the terrifying spectres of a guilty conscience. Every body knows that God is infinitely merciful. But yet the word of God assures us, and it is a fundamental truth, which every christian is acquainted with, Mat. xxii. 14. That *few are chosen* amongst many which are *called;* that the *gate which leads to life is strait and narrow*, and that there are but *few who find it*, Mat. vii. 14. So that all the splendid appearance of God's mercy, when it is well examined, seems to vanish out of sight, or shrink into a little compass, if compared with the innumerable numbers of those reprobates, Rom. ix. 22. who are *pre-*

pared and *fitted for destruction*. Is not this enough to make a sinner tremble? A sinner who is conscious to himself of being much more guilty in the sight of God, than many millions of those souls who are already gone before him, and already suffer the eternal flames of hell?

These thoughts, I must confess, are terrible to him whose eyes are open by God's grace, to see the malice of his sins, and see death, judgment and damnation present to him: such thoughts as these, to such a man, are terrible beyond expression. But however, if a man be more afraid than hurt, where is the harm of his fear? Are we not all obliged to humble our proud hearts *under the powerful hand of God*, 1 Pet. v. 6. and *work out our salvation with fear and trembling?* Phil. ii. 12. Is not our obligation to fear consistent with our greater motives, greater obligations to hope? It is one of the most dangerous mistakes that we are subject to. We seem to fancy that our fear destroys our hope; and that we cannot hope unless we cease to fear. We take these two affections of the mind like mortal enemies, because their humours are so opposite. But, as that friendship is the greatest, which no difference of humour can divide: so, if we examine well the matter, we shall find that fear and hope are such inseparable friends, they cannot possibly subsist without each other's company; the separation of the one is certainly the death and ruin of the other. Fear without hope degenerates into despair. Hope without fear is now no longer hope, but dangerous presumption. If now and then our minds are troubled and perplexed with fear, we must not therefore presently conclude, that we have lost our hope: no, we should have lost it if we did not fear.

If the consideration of God's justice make a sinner tremble, he may lawfully desire to be delivered from the uneasiness, the pain and anxiety, which are the troublesome companions of his fear: but as for fear itself, it is an essential duty of a christian which cannot upon any terms admit a dispensation. If the unsearchable designs and secrets of God's providence are apt to fill our souls with apprehensions and fears, this only helps us to perform the one half of our duty, without prejudicing the performance of the other; for the more we fear his justice, so much more we hasten to the shelter of his mercy.

This was the only refuge which the royal prophet had recourse to, Ps. lxxvi. 3. *In his days of trouble,* when *his soul refused to be comforted. Has God,* says he, *forgotten to be gracious? Has he shut up in anger all tender mercies? Is his mercy entirely gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Oh no! his promise cannot fail: he cannot deceive nor be deceived. He has signed his promise more than once in scripture: and with a solemn oath has delivered it. A promise and an oath, which by commission from himself, his ministers are ordered to make use of.

When sinners are dejected with temptations of despair: when their transgressions and sins lie heavy upon them: when they begin to pine away with fear and melancholy thoughts of never being able to recover, what shall we say to comfort them?

Say to them, says the prophet, Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 14. *If the wicked turn from his sin,* if he repent, if he amend, *and walk in the statutes of life, he shall surely live,* and what can be more sure since God himself is pleased to say it? *He shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the sins he has committed shall be* ever *mentioned to him;* he

shall hear of them no more; they shall not rise in judgment against him: God himself has promised, *He shall surely live; he shall not die.*

Say to them again; and say it boldly in his name, whose justice makes them tremble. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live*, says the Lord *God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Return*, says he, *return from your evil ways: Why will you die?*

Why will you die? As if he should say, you may live if you will; I always am at hand, prepared to help you, if you heartily repent; you know you may recover if you have a mind; you know that if you die, it is because you *will: As I live, I have no pleasure in your death*, and therefore I have reason to complain, why *will you die?*

Dear christians, what can we wish for more? we know that God can help us if he will. We need no farther proof than his own word. We have his word: we have his oath: he cannot take his own name in vain, and he has sworn by his own life, *He has no pleasure in our death;* he does not of himself desire it; but that we return and live. O! we are happy; for whose sake God swears! But o! how miserable are we; if when God himself is pleased to swear we do not believe him. If deeds are better proof than words, let us pass from what he has said to what he has done. What has he done for sinners? or rather, what has he not done? For them he came from heaven; for them he lived a painful life on earth; for them he died upon the cross, Mat. ix. 13. *I came not*, says he, *to call the just, but sinners;* he came because it was necessary he should come: and therefore, for their sakes, for whom it was most necessary, for them he principally came. All his conversation was in their company; he made it his chief business to oblige them; he followed them

from place to place; he thought of nothing else but how to gain their love; he came with a design to inflame their hearts; he brought down fire from heaven with him, and wished for nothing more than that this fire might burn. His more than ordinary kindness was on all occasions so visibly remarkable, that he was taken notice of and pointed at. The pharisees were scandalized to see it. And in those days it was his great reproach, Mat. xi. 19. He was so much *a friend to publicans and sinners*. All this while, alas! they little understood his business upon earth. His great compassion of their misery was the occasion of his coming. And since their indigence first brought him from above, it was no wonder the relieving of it was his chief employment here below. He came as a physician to his dying friends, whom he most dearly loved; and therefore took most care, and was the most concerned for those who were the most dangerously sick. Thus did our God shew himself to sinners. Thus did he love his enemies, and treat them as his dearest friends, Thus did he live to serve them, till at length he died to save them.

St. Paul concludes from hence, we now have much more hope than ever, Rom. v. 10. *For if when we were enemies, we* then *were reconciled to God;* undoubtedly we now have much more, *being reconciled* to hope *we shall be saved.* If then before he sent his only Son, God loved his enemies so dearly as to send him: we may well conclude, that since he came amongst us, since he interposed betwixt us and his Father's anger, since he died to reconcile us to him, Rom. viii. 34. since he *rose again*, and at the *right hand* of his Father, is our advocate in heaven, *making intercession for us;* surely now our humble supplications joined with his, and offered *in his name*, Jo. xiv. 15;

will, for his sake, be more easily received. If then a contrite and humble heart was always so agreeable that he never would despise it, will he now refuse it? If the total sum of all the horrid crimes of mankind, during several ages; if the malice of them altogether, could not any way divert the course of ever-flowing mercy; if it could not hinder him from sending Jesus to redeem the world, how can we think the greatness of our sins can hinder him from having mercy on us when we heartily repent?

Let us therefore, once for all, humbly confess and own our fault. The truth is, we are proud, and willing to excuse ourselves. We are willing to lay the blame of our impenitence at our Creator's door, and say, he will not pardon us, he will not give us grace, he will not save us: when, if we well examine, we shall find the blame is always ours; we will not repent, we will not comply with his grace; in a word, we will not be saved.

All we can say in our defence is, that our sins are great. God will not look upon such grievous sinners as we are. I cannot say they are not great, or that we are not grievous sinners: but that therefore God will never look upon us, is as false as the word of God is true. He hates the sin, but loves the sinner: he hates the leprosy, but loves the leper: and, as a merciful father, he rejoices more at the repentance of one sinner, than the innocence of ninety-nine, who do not stand in need of it.

Let us therefore, once again, humbly acknowledge and confess our fault. We only think our leprosy is so inveterate God will not suffer us to come into his sight, he will not cure us, he will not make us clean. The truth is, we are so negligent, so stupid, so insensible of our condition, that though we now and then are terrified to see the

danger of it, nevertheless we will not make our supplications to him as we ought, we will not be cured, we will not be cleansed.

DANGER OF DELAY.

SECT. I.

How apt we are to defer Repentance.

THAT we are all of us some time or other betwixt this and death, obliged, under pain of eternal damnation, to rouse our sleepy souls from the bewitching lethargy of sin; it is an important truth which no man can dispute. We all are fully satisfied, that if we live in the state of sin, if our affections be criminal, if our hearts be divided betwixt heaven and earth; we must, before we die, repent and amend, or we are all lost for ever. Luke xiii. 3. *Unless we repent, we shall all perish.*

This we agree upon: the difficulty lies not in the knowing but in the performing of our duty. When we discourse with ourselves in general terms, concerning what we ought to do, the debate soon comes to an issue: but as we descend to the particulars of when and how, we come not so easily to a resolution about the time. We suppose that we are able at our pleasure to change our hearts, subdue our passions, and reform our lives: but our hearts at present are otherwise engaged; our passions are youthful, and very importunate; our way of life, though none of the best, is suitable to the common maxims of the

world, and what haste, I pray, to do just now, what may as easily be done another time whenever we please? besides the present circumstances are very particular; an abrupt disengagement would now go very much against our pursuits; we had better for a time content our passions, and bring them to a composition: when this or that business is over, that we may more freely attend to the work of our salvation, when our company changes, when we meet with a juncture of more favorable circumstances: o! then we will begin the new man, bid adieu to the follies of this world; and from that instant, date the beginning of our journey towards heaven.

Thus the color of piety gives a reputation to the delusion: we cover the popular cheat with an agreeable disguise: and, betwixt gratifying our inclinations on the one side, with a criminal condescendence, and pacifying the remorses of our conscience on the other side, with a plausible pretence of future amendment at a more convenient time; we make virtue in appearance, subscribe to our vices, and counterfeit God's hand to one of the worst temptations of the devil.

SECT. II.

How Dangerous it is to defer Repentance.

IT is clear we are not masters and disposers of our time: only he, who was the first author of time, who now conserves it, and who will one day put a final period to it; he, I say, and only he, disposes of it as he pleases.

Besides, the changing of our hearts is far above our single strength; we are not able of ourselves even to begin so great a work, much less to perform it at our leisure whenever we pleased St. Gregory assures us, and we are fully convinced

of the truth of this observation, that "God who promises to pardon us if we repent, has never promised us the time of our repentance."

It is true we cannot but confess, to the great shame of our ingratitude, that our Creator loves us far above our merit. If we look back from hence as far as the first creation, and carry our serious thoughts through all the steps of providence, we meet with nothing but remarkable instances of his goodness towards us. Nay, if we yet look farther back, from the first moment of this world into eternity, we find him before the beginning of all time, entertaining his thoughts with the premeditation of our welfare; and in the first page of his eternal accounts, we find the great design of man's redemption, that stupendous mystery of mercy and justice, the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who held nothing so dear, no obligation so important as our sanctification; even to the degree of laying down his life for the advantage of that sacred interest. See here the motives which we have to think he loves us! yet give me leave to tell you, he is not so fond of us, but that he can be angry at us, when he finds his love neglected. Witness all miserable christian souls, who once were happy in the same testimonies of his affection; who thought as we do, to reform their lives at a convenient season; who supposed, as we do, that God's extraordinary grace would never fail to be at hand, whenever they pleased to have occasion for it. Alas! poor souls, they now are to remain in the flames of hell for all eternity; and know too late, that though God never fails to bestow his extraordinary graces, where he finds a faithful correspondence of our endeavours with his merciful assistance; yet he often shuts his hand if we withdraw ours. He does not first desert us; yet if

deserted by us, it is no wonder if he treat us upon equal terms, and so desert us.

Wonder not that God who is so infinitely good, can find in his heart to abandon thus a sinner, who stifles the remorses of his conscience, who resists the frequent inspirations which invite him to repentance, who has always something else to do when he thinks of his duty, always is so rude, so scornfully uncivil, in receiving all the embassies of peace which heaven sends him; that every trifling object which salutes his fancy, every miserable creature which a silly passion recommends to him, is sure to have preference, and be the first admitted.

How often does God court us when we are alone, as it were carefully managing that favorable occasion, when it may be presumed we are at leisure for his entertainment? But, alas! we are perhaps never less alone than when we are alone: the common enemy of mankind is then most busy to prevent the advantage of such a happy circumstance. How often does he apply himself to us when any sudden accident has crossed our inclinations, when we have been disappointed in our intrigues, when we begin to find our labor lost in the pursuit of what we hunted after, when we sit down angry, and affronted at the confusion of our mistake, almost ready to fall out with the world for having cheated us; then it is that he takes hold of this conjuncture; begins in a loving manner to expostulate with us; to prove to us; how treacherous a friend we find the world to be; on the contrary, how constant and faithful a friend he has been to us, from all eternity to this moment; how ready he is, notwithstanding all that is past, to receive us with open arms into favor again, if we return sincerely to him. And how do we hear-

ken to all this? why, truly, it passed away like a little fit of melancholy; we were then in an ill humour; we are glad it is over, and so we think no more on it. Whatever God speaks to our hearts is all out of doors: our hearts are shut against him all the time, Apoc. iii. 20. *He stands at the door and knocks;* and we neglect him, letting him stand and wait our leisure; we approve the friendship of the world before his; and though we may have some slight thoughts of hearing him some other time, yet for the present we flatly deny him entrance, and refuse him audience.

Let us now consider a little: what pitiful worms we are, who, thus contemn the Almighty, who is he whom we affront; what trifles we prefer before him; and we shall not wonder, if at length he leave us and desert us, with a resolution never more to offer us these extraordinary favors, Job. viii. 21. *I go away,* says he, *and you shall seek me and you shall die in your sin.*

SECT. III.

Reasons why Delay is so dangerous.

THAT I may discover yet more clearly the extravagance of sinners, who defer the conversion of their hearts from time to time, upon a vain presumption of chusing their own time; I suppose, as a fundamental principle, 1 Pet. v. 5. that *God gives his grace to the humble, and resists the proud!*

He who values himself upon being wise enough in the management of his salvation; who neglects the time which God's great mercy offers him; who presumes he can, whenever he pleases, chuse the time of his conversion; such a person, if ever he approach the throne of grace, comes in a disposition directly opposite to reconcitiation; he can-

ries pride barefaced in the very front of him; and the address he presents is indorsed with the very same fault which he begs pardon for.

A true convert comes trembling, with a heart truly humbled under the omnipotent hand of an offended Majesty; and such a penitent will always find favor; a contrite and humble heart God will never despise; all his former offences will pass for nothing, Ezek. xxxiii. 16. *None of his sins which he committed shall be mentioned to him:* in the day of his conversion his impiety shall never hurt him: what time soever God shall please to mark out to him, if he manage that, he is secure.

But if a sinner carelessly reject God's inspirations, and from time to time neglect the opportunities he mercifully offers him; if he behave himself as if he thought his time of reconciliation were entirely at his own disposing; and upon this account, when he thinks fit, presents himself before the throne of grace; his very coming in this manner is an act of pride, a pride by which he dangerously presumes upon a more than ordinary favor, such as he knows has been denied to many thousands, who are damned for ever, for less sins than his, and less neglect of the Almighty; a pride which is the greatest provocation that can be imagined, in as much as it abuses all his infinite goodness, forbearance and patience, not only to the utmost degree of contempt, but even to an impudent assurance of obtaining mercy when we please, although we have so much, so often, and so long, contemned it. This is a sufficient reason, why God may abandon such proud penitents as often as he pleases: and this reason is attended with a sort of obligation, if a man may term it so, incumbent upon providence, if not always, at least generally, and for the most part, to treat them according to their merit.

This obligation arises from two titles. God is the Creator of man, and the Redeemer of sinful man. The first gives him the dominion of being the supreme and universal Lord and Master of the universe; under which title it belongs to him to give laws to all the parts of it, and to ordain such means as may with a smooth and easy, yet strong and steady influence, promote and carry on the great design of the creation. Hence comes the obligation of supporting the power, and maintaining the authority of his government which would immediately fall to nothing, if his too great indulgence always tolerate the open violation of his precepts, joined with all the indignities, affronts, and insolencies of a haughty subject, that will not be reclaimed but when he pleases, will not take the advantage of those favorable opportunities which are so often offered him, but defers the only necessary business of his life from time to time, upon a proud presumption of being received at any hour whensoever he pleases. Nothing under heaven can on this occasion keep up the spirit and vigor of discipline amongst us, and place the fear of God before our eyes, but a just and severe punishment, such as becomes the indignation of an angry God, abused, affronted, and contemned by his creatures.

This motive, which arises from the title of Creator, is abundantly sufficient; but yet the title of Redeemer is a far more powerful inducement to the rigor of his justice. The creation of the world was by saying, Be it done: a word said, and the whole work was done. But the redemption of sinful man, the extraction of him out of the profound abyss of sin and malice, was a more laborious master-piece of mercy and justice; it cost him his descent from heaven, a painful life for many years upon earth, and the last drop of his

most precious blood upon the cross. Having redeemed us from the devil at so dear a rate, and having paid the utmost price of our salvation, he has a strict right to the honor and consideration of his mercy, Isa. xlii. He is *Lord* of all, *and his glory he will not give to another*. He is our Lord and Master; by redemption all of us are his; he has paid the full discharge of our account; but he will not apply the value of this payment to those persons, whose presumption will dare challenge a share of it with him; he bestows it only where it may be evident, if not to all the world, at least to every sinner's conscience who receives the benefit, that nothing but the power of his grace could work so wonderful a resurrection, and free him from the servitude of sin.

He who made our hearts cannot but know the temper of our inclinations. He cannot but see how partial and unequal we are in our judgments. If any thing be amiss with us we presently begin to murmur and repine within ourselves, as if God only were the author of our failings. But if we succeed in any thing that seems praise-worthy, either in the sight of God or man, we presently assume the reputation of it to ourselves. Our faith teaches us the contrary: and we seem to believe it. But yet I know not how it is, our pride which comes into the world with us, that vice which is the first we fight with, and the last we conquer, is so apt to work upon our judgment that if we examine well, we cannot but observe we always are a great deal more inclined to magnify our own endeavours than to admire the power of grace. If God should never treat us as we merit; if he should never abandon those, who from his goodness take occasion to abuse it; we should grow insensible of our necessities; we should forget our

obligations to the grace of our redeemer; we should behave ourselves as if we thought that *all is done by our high hand, and not by* the assistance of *our Lord*, Deut. xxxii. 27. This is one reason that God rejects sinners, and at least generally, and for the most part, refuses them audience in a time of their own chusing, who during the time which he offered for their purpose, never would vouchsafe to hearken to him, Jo. viii. 21. *I go away*, says he, *and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sins.*

SECT. IV.

That we ought to begin immediately.

"HE who has promised pardon to those who repent, has never promised true repentance to those who defer it." A man must be a stranger to the ordinary course of providence, who does not know that there are certain times in which our God is kinder and more favorable to us; when clouds of anger disappear, when heaven seems to smile upon us, and the Almighty seems pleased to hear the prayers and addresses of his people. It is not that God is liable to any shadow of inconstancy: he always is inclined to mercy, and nothing but our sins can force him to the rigor of his justice. Sometimes he showers down his graces in plentiful abundance; visits and inspires us with good thoughts, good inclinations to amend our lives; strongly and sweetly moves us; frequently and importunately presses and solicits us to true repentance. But if we slight his favors he withdraws them from us: mercy neglected and abused gives place to justice; and all those great and extraordinary graces which before abounded are denied us, that we may by this means grow sensible of their necessity and our dependency, their power and our weakness,

What wise man is there in the world, who reading this will not fear the deferring of his conversion, though it were but for one day? who knows, whether this shall be the last day or no that ever God will call him? Prov. i. God says, *I called, and you refused to come; I held out my hand, and you would not look towards me, and therefore I will forsake you in your extremity.* He does not say how many times he called, or how long he held out his hand. God says, I stand at *the door, and knock:* but he says not how often. Almighty God is ready and bountiful to knock and call; but yet he binds himself to no time or space, but comes and goes at his pleasure. And they who take not their time when they are offered, are excuseless before his justice, and do not know whether ever it shall be offered them again or no: for that this thing is only in the will and knowledge of God alone; who takes mercy where it pleases him best, and is bound to none. And when the prefixed time of calling is once past, woe be to that party; for a thousand worlds, perhaps, will not purchase it again.

This reason is abundantly sufficient to make us manage carefully the work of *our salvation with fear and trembling; and humble ourselves under the powerful hand of* God, Phil. ii. 12. without pretending to any absolute security of our admittance whensoever we please. We are certainly damned if we never ask pardon; probably it may be yet time enough if we ask it now: and in concurrence of a certain ruin on the one side, with a probability of a safety on the other, no wise man will lose time to deliberate upon the choice.

Some will say, perhaps, it is a severe case to renounce all worldly affections, and deny them what is most dear to them; to declare war against their violent passions, and to undergo the hardship

of perpetual service in the engagement, if we have no absolute security of making peace whenever we desire it. Had we an assurance of our pardon whensoever we ask it, it were some encouragement to undertake a thorough reformation of our lives. But to renounce all upon a hazard of gaining nothing, is too cool an invitation to encounter so painful and laborious a task.

O man, says St. Paul to the Romans, ix. 20. *who art thou, that* thus *repliest against God?* Who are you that dare presume to article with him in this manner? Is it not enough to have so frequently transgressed his laws, so much contemned his menaces, so long abused his patience? Is it not enough to have idolized the objects of your passion? to have set up your single self in opposition to all the dictates of duty and obedience? to have affronted the Omnipotent hand, which, had not his mercy held it, had long since sunk your miserable soul to the abyss of hell? Is not this enough, unless the same pride which began your misery accompany also the petition of your pardon? Remember that *God resists the proud, and gives grace* only *to the humble*, 1 Pet. v. 5. Remember, that it is a very proud beggar who will not ask an alms except he be assured before hand of receiving it: and that God is so far from receiving that insolent request of such a proud petitioner, that on the contrary, he openly declares he hates him, Eccl. xxv. 4. *My soul*, says he, *hates a proud beggar*.

Ah christians! if we hope for salvation, we must come in another disposition. We must not lose time in debating whether or no we have a certain prospect of success, Phil. ii. 12. We must *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*. 1 Pet. v. 6. and *humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God*. In this conjecture we have no-

thing else to do, but fly in all haste to the *Throne of Grace.* Every moment is precious; every moment increases the danger.

The prodigal son, whose imitation our Saviour recommends to us, proposing him as the great example of a humble penitent, did not lose time in studying whether his father would receive him or not; he did not first enquire into his father's humour, how he stood affected to him; whether he was ready to admit him; or determined never more to look upon him; but, immediately, at his first coming to himself, he said, Luke xv. 17. *I will arise and go to my Father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned.* So far was he from any absolute assurance of his pardon, and so sensible of his unworthiness, he did not so much as offer to demand a perfect reconciliation, but left himself entirely to his father, to dispose of him and do with him what he pleased. *Father, I am not worthy to be called your son.*

Alas! what can we do in this condition? We must redouble our prayers which we have heretofore so often hurried over, with as much inconvenience and concern as if we were afraid lest God should hear us, and assist us with his grace to *take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow him,* Mat. xvi. 24.

If for a month, a year, or more, we find no great effect of mercy, we must still persevere firm in our endeavours: the more we fear God's anger, the swifter we must fly to the protection of his goodness. We must not sink under the apprehensions of our reprobation, but without delay we must resolve, either to obtain pardon or die in the demanding of it.

If the Almighty seem to take no notice of us; if he seem, as it were, to order us from his sight, we have nothing else to say, John vi. 68. but,

Lord, whither shall we go? what way is there to fly from thine anger, but by the speediest recourse we possibly can make to the shelter of thy infinite goodness? We know we deserve an eternal banishment from thy presence: we know we often have refused thee audience: we know it was our common answer, Prov iii. 28. *Go, and come again* another time: and therefore, we know we have no reason to complain, if now we are forsaken and abandoned by thee. But this is only what we deserve; it is only what we justly fear: thou nevertheless commandest us to hope otherwise; and it is in compliance with this command, Rom. iv. 18. that we *hope even against hope.* We come not to dispute about our heaven or our hell? We come not to capitulate upon the articles of our salvation; we only fear as we have reason, and hope as we ought; so that setting aside the whole solicitude of that affair, we leave it entirely to thy mercy. We come with a contrite and a humble heart, full of nothing but a sincere sorrow for all our past offences, joined with a hearty resolution never to offend thee any more, except it may be an offence for sinners, such as we are, to continue in thy presence; which cannot be: no, no; though we should see thy sword of justice drawn against us, and thy omnipotent hand stretched out to strike us dead at thy feet, we will not quit the place, Job viii. 15. *Although thou killest us, we will still trust in thee.*

This is the humble heart which pleases our God; the heart which he cannot refuse. Such a contrite, such a humble heart, he never will despise. This is the only disposition that can make amends for the abuse of so much goodness; and for the deferring of our conversion so long, upon a proud presumption of amendment when we pleased. Such a humble heart as this gives God no reason to

be jealous of his honor: his hand appears manifestly in the management and preparation of it. *The finger of God is here.* Such a convert as this will never challenge any share in the honor of his conversion; but admiring the benefit, will resign the honor, and humble himself so much the more in his presence who made him what he is. But God will always have the honor of the work; he will be merciful when he thinks fit, and not allow proud man to dispose of his mercy: he will take his own time, and confound the presumptuous pride of those, who as if they were God's equals, rather than his servants, make no doubt but they can chuse a time convenient when they please.

Sinners, deceive not yourselves. Think not that God is always equally disposed to hear us, whensoever we appoint the time for audience. He will not suffer us to pretend to the honor of beginning our conversion, and challenging his greatest graces at our leisure. It is true he died to save us: but though he died for our benefit, he died for his own honor; and will not part with any share of this honor to receive a proud penitent, Isa. xlii. 8. *He is Lord of all, and his glory he will not give to another*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *He resists the proud, and* only to *the humble he gives grace* in this world, and glory in the next.



A CONTRITE HEART.

SECT. I.

Sorrow for our Sins.

O MY God! God of my Soul, my life, my heart, and all that is within me! I have sinned, o my God; I have offended thee, I have done ill before the face of heaven and earth. Neither the stars of heaven nor the grains of sand upon the earth, are equal to the boundless number of my grievous sins.

Ah my God! my Maker, my Preserver, my Redeemer, and only Benefactor, how it grieves me to have so offended thee! I am much more troubled at my great ingratitude, than at the greatness of the torments I deserve.

O that I could bewail with tears of blood, the base unworthiness of my behaviour to my only, most loving, most endearing, most deserving friend! a friend who always loved me, even when I loved my silly humors, and his miserable creatures more than him, who always loved me, even when I was his most ungrateful enemy; and notwithstanding all, still made me whatsoever I was, still gave me whatsoever I had, and still invited me, nay, even sought to induce me, with daily inspirations of his grace, to love him above all things. O that my eyes were living fountains of continual repentance, to bewail my base unworthiness.

And yet, although my bleeding heart should burst out at my eyes, my grief would never be equal to my grievous sins; the guilt of which is nfinite, and infinitely greater than I am able to

conceive. Though I should weep with tears of blood in every corner of the earth where I have sinned; all that would never wash away the guilt or scandal of my crimes. There is nothing but the bleeding sacrifice of the unspotted lamb of God; there is nothing but the blood of Jesus dying for my sake upon the cross; there is nothing else can reconcile me to the sovereign majesty which I have so provoked; there is nothing else can wash out the deep stains of my unspeakable ingratitude.

This is that mercy of my God, which the admiring world has reason to call great: that mercy which is truly great, not only in itself, but great to all that are partakers of it. Ps. l. *Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy* great *mercy. Wash* my poor soul *from its iniquity, and cleanse it from its sins, sprinkle me* only with the blood of Jesus, *and I shall be cleansed: wash me with it, and I shall be whiter than snow. Cast me not away from thy face,* but look upon *a contrite and a humble heart,* which, for the sake of thy *beloved Son, with whom thou art well pleased.* I hope *thou wilt not despise;* but that thou wilt *have mercy on me, o God, according to thy great mercy.*

SECT. II.

Resolutions of Amendment.

I *Have said, Now I begin,* Ps. lxxvi. Alas! how often have I said so, and as often broken my word! and what hope have I now to keep it, more than at any other time? When I renew the doleful memory of my relapses, how I tremble at the very thought! to think how often in a lukewarm fit of piety, I have imagined I was now beginning to amend my life; and yet, how soon,

how easily, how shamefully has every sudden passion, every sinful inclination, every silly humour overcome my best and firmest resolutions! Proud as I was I still went on in the same road; still fancied it was easy to reform, when I resolved upon it; and still excused myself, by laying all the fault upon my neighbours, my employments, or some other circumstances of my life. And yet whatsoever business I have been employed in, whatsoever circumstances have attended me through all the several changes of my fortune, I have always been the same frail creature, always unequally unfaithful to my word. What hope then have I now to keep it, more than at any other time?

Must I despair? no, but it is absolutely necessary for me to despair of my own strength, that I may seriously begin to hope in nothing else but him, who *gives grace to the humble, and resists the proud*, 1 Pet. v. 5. And may I by his grace persevere all my life, improving each day more and more in this despair, which is the reason why I hope more now than any other time.

O that I had long since despaired entirely of my own sufficiency, and placed my confidence in nothing but the powerful assistance of his grace; I should not then have been so negligent, so openly exposed on every side, to the continual surprizes of my passions. I should then have carefully employed the precious moments of time, either in studying how to meet my several dangers, or forecasting how to avoid them. I should then have prayed as heartily as men do in a storm, who every moment fear to sink, and every moment lift their trembling hands and weeping eyes to heaven; the same angry heaven, whence they justly apprehend their fatal ruin. Ah, my God, how seldom have I prayed so! And how often have I asked thy grace, as carelessly as if I had no need of it!

My resolutions like my prayers hitherto have only been in general terms: that now I would reform my life; I would no longer be a slave to passion and humour; I would now begin to be a saint; and, o! how ashamed am I to think of all my follies! Alas! this very pride which made me thus ashamed, was that which made me fancy it was an easy matter to amend; and therefore made me careless in observing the particular occasions of my greatest sins, the remedies which ought to be applied, and the impediments which ought to be removed. But since the sad experience of my weakness makes me wiser, I am now resolved it shall be the chief business of my life, to watch and study all the motions of my heart: what passions are predominant; what inclinations second them; by what approaches they gain ground; and by what means in this or that particular occurrence they may be resisted, wakened, and subdued.

A perfect master of his business needs but now and then apply his rule, because 'tis habit which guides his skilful hand. But I, unskilful wretch, who only now begin the necessary art of living well, and have so many years contracted an ill habit of neglecting all holy precepts; I must now, not only in my morning recollection, carefully foresee each danger I am like to meet with in the day, but frequently renew these pious resolutions; in all decisions cherish the eternal truth which came from heaven to instruct me; and examine seriously, if the employment of my thoughts, words, actions, and desires, be suitable to so divine a rule.

All this I am resolved upon, in presence of my God, and the whole court of heaven. Help me, all ye blessed spirits, who are joyful witnesses of these my holy resolutions; assist me now to make

a humble offering of them all before the throne of grace, and join your better prayers with mine, to beg a blessing on them; without which, although I daily water them with penitential tears they never will increase and bring forth fruit. I have said: now I begin. Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, for such a change comes only from the right hand of the highest.

A HUMBLE HEART.

SECT. I.

The Necessity and Advantages of Humility.

ALL our Saviour's life and conversation upon earth, was a continual instruction for the modelling of ours. But above all things, he particularly recommended to us the example of his great humility; *Learn of me*, says he, *because I am humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls*, Matt. xi. 29.

The necessity of this incomparable virtue is so great, that it is impossible without it to make any progress in a spiritual life. Our pride corrupts and ruins all our virtuous actions, unless humility begin, continue, and conclude them.

St. Gregory says, true virtue never grows in any soul, but when it is nourished by its proper root, which is humility. This plain comparison expresses very well its nature and its properties. 1. A flower fades and withers when it is parted from its root. 2. The root is never better than when hidden in the earth, and trampled under foot.

3. A tree is longer lived and yields more fruit, according as its root is deeper, and lies lower under ground.

How much our faith depends upon humility, the apostle tells us, when he speaks of *casting down imaginations*, 2 Cor. x. 5. *every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and captivating every thought to the obedience of Christ.* Man's reason is but weak, and subject to mistake; and therefore a submissive spirit is required; the want of which has been the first beginning of all heresies, and verified St. Paul's prediction, 2 Tim. iii. That *in the last days dangerous times will come, because men will be proud; despisers of good people; and ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of truth.*

The same humility which guides our faith encourages our hope; because the more we fear our weakness, and distrust in our own strength, the more we have recourse to God, in whom we place our confidence; and thus, 2 Cor. xii. 10. *when we are weak*, says the apostle, *we are strong*, that is to say, when once we rightly understand ourselves, and being thoroughly convinced of our infirmity, we seriously begin to hope in nothing but the assistance of God's grace: then it is that he himself begins to take in hand the management of our affairs; provides for us in all our spiritual wants; supports and guides us by a special providence in our pious undertakings. It is with us, as it is with beggars, who expose their ulcers and their miseries; the more they lay them open in the public view, the more they move our pity, and obtain more alms of charitable persons; so the more sincerely we confess, and with profound humility acknowledge our extreme necessities, exposing them in presence of our God, the more we

move him to compassionate our miserable state; and bestow upon us more abundantly the riches of his grace. Humility, as it encourages our hope, so it improves our charity. A humble man perpetually considering his innumerable faults and imperfections, the more he sees his great unworthiness the more he wonders at God's patienee, and is more inclined to love his goodness above all things. Nothing makes me better understand how good God is, than when I see with how much patience he endures a man, who is not able to endure himself. It is he who is offended; I am the offender. I all wickedness, and he all holiness. As wicked as I am I cannot endure myself; as holy as he is he suffers me with patience. I only see a small part of my faults, and hate myself; he sees them all, and yet he does not cease to love me. I have such a horror of myself, when I consider how inconstant, and how frail I am; and yet I cannot perceive that God has any horror of me. On the contrary, the more I humbly own my wickedness, the more loving and endearing proofs he gives me of his insuperable goodness.

Our humility preserves and guards our chastity. St. Bernard does not fear to say, that even the purity of the blessed Virgin herself had never been agreeable to God without it. Besides, it is not only necessary to preserve our chastity, but is the best and most effectual remedy that can be to procure it. Luxury is the punishment of pride, and chastity the triumph of humility. St. Jerome says, "it is hard to find a heretic that loves chastity; although in his discourses he may seem to praise it, and pretend to practise it." The reason is, because God gives grace only to the humble and resists the proud, 1 Pet. v. 5. and where there is no grace there is no chastity; but all concupiscence. Hence comes the common saying of our novelists,

that chastity is impossible: and it is no wonder that they think so; for it is so to the proud and graceless, who can never be truly chaste till they are truly humble. They are *given up by God to* all *uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts*, Rom. i. 24. and it is but just, that if the soul refuses due submission to God, the body should be found by his permission, as untractable and disobedient to such a soul. Because, says St. Gregory, "by pride they prefer themselves before men; by luxury they soon become like beasts."

A man might easily go through all other virtues, and observe humility, as necessary for the acquiring and preserving of them all. But, what has been already said, suffices to convince us, that the most compendious method of aspiring to perfection, is to make it our chief business to be truly humble.

It is enough to add, that all our virtues and good actions, without humility, will never save us; and that all our sins and imperfections, with true humility, will never damn us; for as soon as ever we are truly humble all our vices leave us, and immediately all virtues take possession of our heart. My soul! why are we then discouraged? why do we despair? why are we occasionally so melancholy, when we think of all our imperfections and faults? if we have reason to despair, have we not also reason to humble ourselves? Let us be so then, and we shall have no longer any reason to despair. Let us but humble ourselves in presence of our God, we shall soon obtain all that we have not; we shall be able to do all that we cannot; and we shall receive all that we deserve not. You cannot fast? at least you can humble yourself. You cannot weep for your sins? Humble yourself, that you cannot. You have not time enough, nor health enough, to say many prayers,

However, you may be quite as humble as if you had. Do what you can, you always pray with much distraction: be content and humble. You are now and then surprised, and fall into some sin; have patience: take more care another time, and be more humble ever after.

A humble heart God never will despise. And is not this enough to shew us the necessity and great advantage of humility? How comfortable is the thought of it to them whose want of health, or other circumstances, will not suffer them to make use of corporal austerities, in satisfaction for their sins! What comfort is it to them to reflect, that still they have a refuge left them in the sanctuary of this virtue. It is the only one they have, if we believe an ancient father of the church. Whoever has committed grievous sins, and has a body weak and sickly, let him tread the footsteps of humility: in all things let him follow where the spirit and the impulse of that virtue lead him: it is the only way he has to save his soul.

SECT. II.

First Degree of Humility.

THE first degree is to have a mean opinion of ourselves, to think ourselves contemptible, and judge that we deserve to be despised by all the world. The knowledge of ourselves, our weakness, and our misery, is no humility; but only is the necessary means to come to this degree of it.

A person truly humble, always has before his eyes his own defects and imperfections; in others, he considers chiefly the perfections and virtues which he finds; and thus he always is persuaded that his neighbours are much better, and more perfect than himself. He loves them with respect

and tenderness. He is not angry at his being valued less than they, but glad to see them all preferred before him.

His sins, which ever are before him, make him sensible that he deserves the worst of punishments: and therefore, whatsoever happens to him, he esteems it infinitely less than his injury deserves. He never thinks himself affronted. Whatsoever wrong is done him, he receives it as a favor in comparison of what he has just reason to expect. He suffers all in silence upon this account: and far from breaking out into complaints, he only calls to mind that humble saying of the prophet, Micah. vii. 9. *I will bear the indignation of my God, because I have sinned against him.*

The hardest calamities we can suffer in this life; the greatest and the most severe humiliations we can think of, are incomparably less than what is due to any single crime, which we commit against the majesty of God. Can we imagine all the world is able to dishonor him too much, who has dishonored God? and is it not just, that having slighted and neglected his Creator, he himself should be despised by all, and live for ever after in disgrace? Remember, that a sinner is a *child of wrath*, an enemy of God, a monster of deformity, condemned to everlasting flames: remember this, and you will shrink below the feet of all the world; because you will be then convinced, that howsoever you are humbled and oppressed, having but once offended God, you deserve to suffer more.

Although my conscience accuse me not. *Though I know nothing of myself*, says the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 4. *yet I am not hereby justified; but he that judges me is God.* When we consider well, how doubtful our condition is, and how we always are uncertain of being justified: this alone, without any

other motives, which are numberless, is of itself abundantly sufficient to humble us.

What christian is there that would dare to shew his face? or man that would not rather wish to sink into the bowels of the earth to hide himself? If this reflection once had made a deep impression in his mind, my crimes are certain, but my pardon is uncertain; nothing can be more uneasy to a soul that would be saved than this uncertainty. But yet there is nothing in the world of greater use for the acquiring and preserving of humility. There is nothing can restrain us more from censuring our neighbours, or despising even those who seem the greatest sinners, than to think that we ourselves are far from having any certainty of being in the state of grace; and that this very moment we may be for any thing we know to the contrary, in equal danger of the everlasting flames of hell.

SECT. III.

Second Degree of Humility.

THE second degree is when we love to be neglected, and desire to be despised. As hard as it appears, if we were once well grounded in the first degree, the way would then be short and easy to the second. If we had but once a mean opinion of ourselves; if once we truly thought ourselves contemptible; if once our judgment were convinced, that we deserve to be despised by all the world; it would not then be difficult to suffer their contempt, we then should even wish for such occasions of improving our humility: they would be always very welcome to us, and afford us every day new joy and consolation. It is certain, says St. Bonaventure, that we naturally love to see our sentiments approved, and

our opinions followed. Which if it be true, as our experience too often teaches us, why are we so uneasy when we see our neighbours under-value us? It is questionless, because we are not, in our judgment, thoroughly convinced that we deserve to be despised; for if we were, we should be glad to see our neighbours despise our opinion.

The dispositions which make way to this degree, are, 1. to shun as much as may be all occasions of praise. 2. To suffer patiently the humours and insults of others. 3. To take no pleasure in our being celebrated and admired.

1. The avoiding all occasions of praise, is recommended to us by the great example of our Saviour, and the universal practice of the saints. Our Saviour fled from those who thought to chuse him king. He shewed his glory on mount Thabor, to no more than three of his disciples, and immediately charged them not to say a word of it. Whensoever his great charity appeared in doing miracles, his great humility appeared no less in his commanding secrecy.

Humility affects not to appear in her own likeness. She forbears expressions which discover her. She desires not only to conceal all other virtues, but particularly to conceal herself. It is a dangerous thing to speak of oneself either well or ill; if well, it is to appear deserving; if ill, it is to appear humble.

A humble man had rather hear another say that he is miserable, inconsiderable, good for nothing, than be heard to say it of himself. At least he never contradicts it. Whosoever says it, he believes it firmly, and is therefore glad that others are of his opinion.

2. If we seriously consider, that the esteem of men is generally, if not always an occasion of presumption and pride; and that the saints them-

selves, who by God's grace were more secure from danger, always fled from such temptations even with aversion and horror; we should certainly conclude, that whatsoever may contribute to the humbling of us, and inducing us to have a mean opinion of ourselves, should be received with patience and embraced as useful means of purchasing, preserving, and increasing our humility. The opportunities of practising this virtue are so frequent every day, that if we did but carefully endeavour to profit by them, we might almost make it our continual exercise.

It happens, says the devout Kempis, that what is pleasing to others shall go well forward; that which others say shall be heard; what thou sayest shall be nothing regarded; others shall ask and shall receive; thou shalt ask and not obtain; others shall be great in the praise of men; but of thee there shall be no speech: to others, this or that shall be committed; but thou shalt be accounted fit for nothing. At this nature is apt sometimes to be troubled; and it is much if thou art humble enough to hear it patiently with silence.

3. To be charmed so little with esteem and honor as to take no pleasure in them, is a third step to the height of this degree; much harder than the other two. For as St. Austin very well observes, although it may be very easy for a man to live without praise, when it is denied, it is hard enough for any man to take no pleasure in it when it is freely offered him. A proud man, says St. Gregory, rejoices even when he knows that his admirers are mistaken in him; for he cares not what his life is in the sight of God, but only values the appearance of it in the sight of men. And therefore he is puffed up with the least applause: he fancies he has reaped the fruit of his endeavours: he desires no more: he aims at nothing else.

But on the contrary, a humble man is so averse from the applause of men that he is uneasy at it. He is afraid there is no real ground for it; or else he fears the loss of his reward in heaven, by receiving it here, and trembles at the apprehension of exchanging for a little popular esteem the crown of everlasting glory, which he hopes for. Solomon says, Prov. vii. 21. *As gold is tried by the furnace, so is a man by his praise.* St. Gregory adds, if he grow vain by hearing it, he is like false gold which suffers by the fire; but if the hearing of it makes him tremble, lest it may be prejudicial to his soul before the sovereign judge, it is like a fire which only serves to purify, and give him a new lustre. We should be so grounded in the knowledge of ourselves, that when we are commended, we may always have before our eyes our base unworthiness; and be so much the more ashamed to think, we are so far from being what we seem to be; that we fall short of being even what we should be.

By these three steps we come at last to the degree of loving and desiring to be undervalued and despised; we become not only humble in our judgment but in our heart. The first degree, which is humility of judgment, was not to be found in Jesus Christ, as St. Bernard well observes, because he knew himself too well to have a mean opinion of himself, or think himself contemptible, or judge that he deserved to be despised by all the world. But the second degree, the true humility of heart, was the humility of our Redeemer. He took pleasure in descending and becoming man: he loved to be neglected, scorned and rediculed: he heartily desired to undergo all injuries, insults and outrages. Behold the example of our master. See the lesson which

he came to teach us, Matt. xi. 29. *Learn of me*, says he, *because I am humble of heart.*

A true disciple of Christ is dead to all things in this world; he hates it and detests it; he desires not to be valued and esteemed in it, but embraces all humiliations with the self-same passion which worldly persons have for honor and esteem; and is as glad to meet with all occasions of appearing inconsiderable and contemptible, as they are over-joyed to meet with opportunities of seeming great.

To know if we be true disciples of our master, and have perfectly acquired this virtue; we must by this rule examine well the disposition of our heart, and see if we rejoice as much at being undervalued and despised, as others do at being honored and applauded.

This maxim is the touch-stone of humility. For it is agreed on by all, that virtue is imperfect in us, till we practise it with satisfaction and pleasure. If we find the least repugnance in the practice, when occasion serves, and use much preparation to surmount the difficulty of it, it is indeed the way to acquire such virtue, but it also is a certain mark we have not yet acquired it in perfection. A master of an art, as Aristotle says, has such a habit of it that he uses no deliberation, but performs the operations of it with such ease, he scarce knows what he is doing when he does his work. And philosophers tell us, that in surprising accidents, we act not by reflection but by habit; for which reason, it is in vain to examine what our inclinations are, and whether we are truly humble or no, by what we do with preparation and leisure; we must carefully examine what we suddenly are apt to do without deliberation.

However by this examen we observe, that notwithstanding our endeavours to improve, we fre-

quently are importuned, and sometimes overcome by pride and vanity; if we are yet so far from taking pleasure in the practice of humility, that we are hardly able to support in silence the uneasiness we suffer in it. Let not this discourage us; but on the contrary, the more we see our weakness let us humble ourselves the more; and let us learn from thence, to use our utmost diligence in laying a more firm foundation of christian humility, which is humility of heart, a thing by no means impossible. For by the grace of God we may be able, says St. Austin, not only to imitate the example of the saints, but also of the sovereign master of the saints. He invites us all to imitate his virtue; and can we fancy he invites us to a thing impossible? *Learn of me*, says he, *because I am humble of heart*. And St. Jerome very well observes, that those words of our Saviour, Matt. xix. 21. *If thou wilt be perfect, come and follow me*, are a manifest conviction that by his grace, which always is at hand, we have it in our power to be perfect if we will.

SECT. IV.

An Objection answered.

IF charity incline us to desire our neighbours' good, and to contribute what we can to their salvation, why should our humility desire that all the world may undervalue us? Without their thinking well of us, in some capacity or other, we shall never do them any good; they never will confide in us; they will not harken to us; we shall have no credit with them. Is it not therefore reasonable, even by the rule of common charity, that we should rather seek their kindness and esteem than their aversion and contempt.

St. Gregory answers: it is one thing to desire our neighbours' esteem; another to rejoice at his profit. It is a crime to covet reputation for its own

sake, and rejoice at being great in the opinion of men. But yet, to wish as much of it as may be necessary for so good an end as that of serving souls, and gaining them to Christ, is an effect of charity. And thus it is lawful to desire our neighbours' good opinion and esteem, so far as may enable us to do them good; because we thus desire it only for their service, and the greater glory of our God, with a sincere and total disengagement from the charms of pride and vanity. If any man, who naturally hates a potion or a pill, upon occasion procures it, and desires to take it, we may be assured, that such a man takes physic, not for the physic's sake, but purely for his health. So when a man, who by an extraordinary grace of the Almighty, hates the applause and honor of this world; when such a man procures, desires, and manages with care the good opinion of men, because it may be useful to him in their service; we may be assured, he only seeks God's honor, not his own.

However this great truth is generally much abused; and under the pretence of it, we only covet the ambition and disguise our vanity. We covet honors, seek preferments, and intrude ourselves into employments, letting slip no opportunity of being or appearing great, and all this while, we plead it is only charity to qualify us for the better service of our neighbours. We have therefore need of no small circumspection to discern the cheat. The way to know it, says St. Gregory, is to examine all occasions where our reputation is a thing indifferent, and useless to our neighbour. If in these we care not for the good opinion of men, we may suppose that when we are concerned for it, it is only for our neighbours' sake and not our own.

St. Gregory thus unites the knot, but St. Francis

cuts it with more ease, and much more clearly takes away the difficulty.

Whatsoever the occasions may be, as he boldly answers; our charity first begins at home, if it incline us to desire our neighbours' spiritual good; with much more reason it inclines us to desire our own; if our reputation may be useful to our neighbour, our disgraces and humiliations, incurred without our fault, may prove more beneficial to ourselves. If when I preach, says he, or when I practise any virtue which is edifying, I am pleased with praises which endanger my salvation; because their good opinion of me helps them to improve by my instruction and example; how much reason have I, for my own-sake to rejoice a great deal more, when having done my best, I still am undervalued and despised; because by this means I myself am more acceptable to God, and more secure of my eternal happiness?

Our Saviour himself, whose charity inclined him to descend from heaven, and to sacrifice his life for sinners, knew that many unbelieving souls were lost by undervaluing and despising him; he knew that many millions of them would have been converted, if they had admired and honored him as he deserved; and yet he never sought for worldly honor as a means to save them; but although their souls were dear to him his honor was not. As *he came from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.* Joh. vi. 38. So he came to seek the honor of his Father, not his own, Joh. viii. 49, 50. *I honor my Father*, says he, *I seek not my own glory.* It is enough, that whilst I only seek his honor he takes care of mine; and that although I never seek my own, yet *there is one that* always *seeks and judges it*, and always will be sure to do me justice. Let us follow the

example of our Saviour, let us make it the chief business of our life, to do the will of him that sent us, not our own. Let us honor our Father in heaven. Let his honor alone be the object of our care, and never let us mind our own, but rest content, that he himself takes care of it. Let no appearance of our neighbours' profit, cheat us into ambition of being popular; but let us faithfully in all things do our duty, for the love and honor of our God; and as for men's opinion of us, let us leave it to his providence. His honor here below is left, as I may say, to our discretion: he commits it to our care: he forces not our liberty, but only offers the assistance of his grace, let us honor him, and serve him as we please. Shall God thus trust his honor in such bad hands as ours? and shall not we be satisfied to trust our honor in such good hands as his?

SECT. V.

Third Degree of Humility.

THE third and last degree is the humility of saints, who are most humble in the sight of God, when they are most esteemed and celebrated by the world.

When a person full of faults and imperfections has a mean opinion of himself; esteems himself no better than he is; and is content to be reputed such as he esteems himself; we may commend him, says St. Bernard, but have little reason to admire him. Who admires to see a poor man have a mean opinion of his riches? think himself no richer than he is; and rest content that others think so too: but if a rich man rank himself amongst the poor, and treat them with respect, as if he were the least considerable of them all; this very well deserves our admiration.

By this description of the third degree, we plainly see that the humility of saints, and the humility of sinners, is the same in substance though they differ in perfection. It is true, we wonder not to see a man stand steady upon even ground: but when we see the same man stand as firm upon a lofty pinacle, we gaze and wonder at him. All this while the man is the same; though we admire him more, because the place is higher, and the difficulty greater. So it is in our present case. Humility is either of the judgment or the heart. The third degree is comprehended in the first and second; but however we admire much more a humble saint; because his eminent degree of sanctity is higher and the difficulty of his being humble, therefore seems much greater.

I say it seems greater, because upon second thoughts I am not apt to think it so. My reason in short is this; humility of judgment and of heart, are chiefly grounded in the knowledge of ourselves and love of God. The first induces us to have a mean opinion of ourselves; the more we know ourselves the more we think ourselves contemptible, and worthy to be despised by all the world. The second makes us glad to be neglected, and desire to be contemned; and as the love of God increases in our hearts, the more we hate and scorn the transitory honor of this world; the more we love to follow the example of a humble God, the more we heartily desire to be agreeable to none but him, as being every day more sensible of this great truth; he only *is approved whom God commends*, 2 Cor. x. 18.

Let us only lay these notions right together. 1. The knowledge of ourselves and love of God is that which makes men saints. No person ever was a saint without them; no man ever was a sinner with them: and the more this knowledge

and this love increase, the greater is the sanctity. 2. This knowledge and this love is that which makes men humble; knowledge helps them to be humble in their judgments; love assists them to be humble in their hearts: the more they know and love, the greater is the assistance of God's grace, which is the only means of making all things easy to us. Why then may we not conclude? Whoever is a saint, the greater saint he is, the easier it is for him to be humble.

Sinners indeed have much more matter for humility to work upon. Their weakness, their corruption, and the misery of their deplorable condition, are incomparably worse. But which is worst of all, they are so miserably blind as not to know their misery. A beggar in his drink imagines he is a prince, and is as proud as if he were. It is true he is miserably poor, but since he knows it not what signifies it? He is as proud as if he were the richest man alive. It is so with sinners. They are drunk with self-love, pride and vanity. They little know, and much less think how poor, how miserable, how contemptible they are. And we may very well apply to them these words of the Apocalypse, iii. 17. 18. *Because thou sayest I am rich, and in need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked:* therefore *I counsel thee to anoint thy eyes that thou mayest see.* This is the general reason why humility is harder to be found in sinners than in saints. The first have more to humble them; but the more they have, the blinder they are, and the less they know it. The second have less to humble them; but the less they have, the more their eyes are open by God's grace, and the more clearly they discover what is enough to make them fear and tremble all their life.

SECT. VI.

First Reason, why the greatest Saints are most humble.

I Shall only add two reasons more, because all saints, I speak of such as are now living, are comprised in these two classes: they are either such as have been sinners heretofore, or such as may be so hereafter.

The first reason is so universal, that it comprehends them both; but more particularly those who have preserved the innocence of their baptismal grace. It is gathered from that oracle of scripture, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you to will and to do according to his pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. See the unsearchable abyss of the Almighty's judgments! where it is dangerous to dwell too long, and search too curiously, lest it cast into an excess of fear. It is enough, that none are saved; but who persevere to the end; and that the greatest saints can never be assured of their perseverance. It is a special gift which the apostle chiefly points at, when he says, Rom. ix. 18, 16. *God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. It is not of him that wills, or him that runs; but of God that shews mercy*; and again, Ephe. ii. 8, 9. *By grace you are saved; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast*. Alas! how is it possible for any saint to be assured of his condition for the future, since he is not certain even of his present state? Who can sound the bottom of our hearts? Or rather who can sound the will of God, and tell us what he thinks of our condition? Who is he that can assure us, we are good enough to be rewarded by him? Woe be that life, how innocent soever, says St. Austin, which he judges without mercy, Ps.

xix. 12. *Who is he*, says David, *that can understand his failings? Cleanse me from my secret faults, o Lord*, Ps. cxlii. 2. and *enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified;* if once thou judgest him according to the utmost rigor of thy justice. Who is there that does not tremble, when he hears the just and holy man whom God himself was pleased to praise, confess, that all his life-time, God was such a terror to him, he was hardly able *to endure it?* Job xxxi. 23. Who can without trembling hear the prophet Isaiah tell us, lxiv. 6. *we are all unclean; and all our righteous works like filthy rags?* Or hear St. Jerome, in the life of St. Hilarion, tell us how that blessed saint was terrified at the approach of death; and to encourage his departing soul, said to himself, go forth my soul; what art thou afraid of? thou hast served thy God these threescore and ten years; and dost thou tremble now to appear before him?

Let us therefore fear and tremble in the way to heaven. Never let us fancy we are so advanced in virtue, that we need not fear. The greatest saints were never so presumptuous as to banish from their thoughts the fear of God, Phil. ii. 12. *They worked out their salvation with fear and trembling.* They were always full of fear, and this fear always humbled them. They were not blinded as we are, with passion and humour; but as they improved in grace, they every day discovered more and more their secret imperfections.

The property of grace is to enlighten the understanding as well as to enflame the heart. It makes us know our misery and love our God, who only can deliver us. These two effects of grace were lively represented on the day of Pentecost, by that mysterious fire which rested on the heads of the apostles. Fire gives light and heat; and as

the fire encreases it affords more heat and greater light. So grace enlightens and enflames the minds and hearts of saints, with knowledge of themselves and love of God; and as their grace improves, this heat and light encrcase: they discern more clearly the innumerable dangers that surround them; and become more *humble under the Almighty hand of God*, 1 Pet. v. 6.

St. Paul compares the different states of sin and grace to light and darkness, night and day, Rom. xiii. 12, 13. *The night*, says he, *is spent, the day is at hand. Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day.* A traveller benighted walks he knows not where. He hardly sees his hand, much less his feet. He sees perhaps some stars shine through the clouds, whose sparkling light serves only to amuse him, and mislead him to a precipice. But when the rising sun appears the stars immediately vanish out of sight; our traveller no longer gazes there, but has a much more useful prospect of the earth below him; where he plainly sees the ground he goes upon, the risings, the descents, the inequalities, and precipices of it. Sinners like benighted travellers march blindly on; mind little what they do, and much less where they go. However now and then they practise some good actions, either out of custsom or good nature; and amuse themselves with some few semblances of virtue, whose dim lustre seems perhaps more sparkling in the darkness of that night, which hides them even from themselves. But it is not so with saints. Their night is spent; their day appears. The sun of justice *rises in their hearts*, 2 Pet. i. 19. Their virtues like the stars, (which only shine in darkness) disappear immediately. The clay which they are made of, the corruption of their nature, the enormity of sin,

the power of their passions, and the weakness of their reason; these are motives of humility which now they clearly see, and daily have before their eyes. Besides all this, they plainly see an infinite variety of artifices and disguises of self-love, which easily assumes all shapes, and counterfeits all virtues, even charity itself. And therefore they suspect the best of all their actions, trembling at the very thought of them, for fear they may be secretly corrupted by self-love. But, above all, the importunity of pride which never ceases to attack them; but continually endeavours to surprize them, notwithstanding all these motives of humility, is that which seems the most extravagant of all their faults, and humbles them the most.

Behold the misery of man! and what can be more miserable if the sight of so much misery suffices not to humble him? The greatest saint who is not conscious to himself, of any forfeiture of his first innocence, has no assurance of his being justified. He may be in the state of grace; but whether so or not he cannot tell. And which is worse, although he knew it, he has no assurance of preserving it one single moment. He who stands may fall; and he who is a saint may become a sinner. Nothing but God's grace is able to support him to the end; and the continuance of this grace requires so faithful and so punctual a co-operation with it, that a very small omission oftentimes suffices to deprive him of it. His perseverance is as it were a chain of graces linked together, and continued to the utmost period of his life; and this is more than he can merit. All that he can do is, to be always vigilant and faithful in the use of every single grace God offers him. One grace well used, draws on another; this a third, and that a fourth: but, if he fail the least in his fidelity, the

chain immediately breaks. And this is that great diligence which the apostle recommends to all good christians; *use diligence*, says he, *to make your calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10, *for if you do, you shall never fall*. I must confess, this saying is extremely comfortable if we do; but if we do not what will become of us? If all our life we use such diligence, the apostle tells us we shall never fall; but if we do not, what remains, but that the greatest saint amongst us will be sure to fall? consider this and tremble whosoever you are; assure yourself the more you are a saint the more you will tremble and the more you will see how terrible a truth this is; which is one reason why the greatest saints, who are the most convinced of it, are always the most humble.

SECT. VII.

Second Reason why the greatest Saints are most humble.

I HAVE said enough of saints who have preserved their innocence. The second reason only regards those, who by their crimes have lost it heretofore, and now are truly penitent. If they who know themselves the best, are therefore the most humble, because they doubt most of their perseverance, surely those who most clearly know the enormity of the sins they are guilty of, have much more reason to be humble because they doubt much more of their obtaining pardon.

There is a great difference, says St. Jerome, between a man whose vessel is entire and richly laden, when he sails into the port of bliss, and him who after shipwreck, after swimming for his life, rides naked on a plank: and after having been dashed a hundred times against the rocks,

at length is cast upon the sands half dead, and almost bruised to pieces. If a man, who sails in a sound vessel, never is secure from storms which may arise, but always doubts of his arrival at the port; we may be sure his case is much more doubtful, and more terrible, who has already suffered shipwreck, and has nothing left him but a single plank to bear him up.

It is true, it happens now and then according to the comfortable observation of a holy man, that he *to whom the winds and sea obey*, is pleased to make them for a time, so calm and quiet, that a man who swims upon his plank with industry and courage, meets by providence another vessel better than his own, and sails with much more comfort, much more joy into the haven, than he would have done, if he had never suffered shipwreck. St. John Climacus in his fifteenth degree, enquires which of the two is the greater in the sight of God; he who died by sin and rose again to life by grace? or he who never died the spiritual death of sin? and answers, that whoever thinks the innocent the more happy of the two is much mistaken. The reason is because all sanctity is founded in humility and charity. Whoever loves God best, and is most humble, is the greatest saint. It often happens that *he to whom a little is forgiven, loves but little*, Luke vii. 47. and it happens now and then that he loves best, who is most mercifully pardoned, and forgiven most. We have in scripture several examples of this nature. Zachary, as soon as he had done sufficient penance for his incredulity, immediately had his speech restored him; and not only that, but he was also honored with the gift of prophecy; which we do not read of before. The prodigal received much greater favors and caresses from his father than he ever had experienced before he left him. Lazarus

himself, who was the figure of great sinners, never had the honor to be entertained at table with the Son of God, before he was by a miracle raised from the grave. St. Peter had not confidence before he sinned, to ask our Saviour who it was that would betray him: but when he had washed away his sins with tears, he was permitted to be more familiar with his master, and was made the sovereign pastor of his church. From whence it is easy to conclude, that sinners may sometimes by penance, grow more perfect than those saints, who having kept their innocence, love God less fervently and serve him with more coldness and indifference. Behold, says St. Ambrose, the great goodness of our God! How liberal and bountiful he is to whom he pleases to be merciful! He is not contented to restore what they have lost. He grants them over and above such graces and favors as they never durst have hoped for. Thus, as the apostle says, Rom. v. 20. *where sin abounded, grace abounds much more;* because the more sin humbles them, the more they are exalted. When a penitent whom sin had blinded, once begins to see and to discover clearly the enormity of his offences, he has much more reason to be humble all his life than if he had been always innocent. He looks upon himself no better than a criminal reprieved, who is upon his good behaviour to procure pardon; and persuades himself that he can never give sufficient proof of his fidelity and the sincerity of his repentance. All his exercises of continual penance never make him vain, but only serve to humble him the more, because he looks upon them only as the remedies of his diseases; and such remedies as he must use till death; which is the only end he hopes to see of his distempers. The employment of his thoughts is the consideration

of his grievous sins, which he perpetually laments; wherever he goes, he never leaves the doleful memory behind him, Mich. vi. 45. *His humiliation is always in the midst of him.* Since therefore he who hates the proud, gives grace to the humble. It is not lawful to infer, that sinners may sometimes arrive to a more eminent degree of sanctity than many of those saints, who never fell quite down but yet walk slowly in the way to heaven.

This happens now and then it is true; but such examples are as rare as they are great. They are effects of more than ordinary grace which God grants when and where he pleases. St. Peter never would have wept so bitterly, if Jesus had not mercifully turned and looked upon him. Lazarus had never risen from the grave, if Jesus had not come himself, and called him forth with a loud voice. The prodigal had never come back to his father, if he had not first come to himself. Alas! poor wretch! he followed swine before; and if he might have filled his belly with their husks, he would have been contented. See the blindness of a sinner! but as soon as ever he came to himself, his eyes were open; and the opening of his eyes was that which brought him to himself. He saw the great enormity of his offences. *Father I have sinned*, says he, *I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son*, Luke xv. 18. The idea of his sins was now so terrible, and made so deep an impression on him, that it humbled him, not only in his judgment but his heart. It humbled him so much, that he not only thought himself unworthy, but desired to be received accordingly; and begged his father not to entertain him as a son, but *as one of his hired servants.*

When once the grace of God enlightens us

and by a miracle of mercy, breaks through the impenetrable darkness with which our passions cloud our reason; this light discovers clearly to us the enormity of sin; and as this light encreases we daily discover more and more. This sight is followed with a sacred heat that softens the obdurate coldness of our temper, by which means the terrible idea of our guilt makes every day a deeper and more sensible impression on our hearts. And this is the second reason why the greatest saints are the most humble; because the greater saints they are, the more they see the great enormity of sin; the more they feel the terror of their guilt, the more they doubt of their obtaining pardon; and the more they fear and tremble all their life.

I.

The Enormity of Sin.

THE humble penitent whose words I lately cited, thus describes his coming to himself. Whilst I pursued, says he, the wandering errors of my heart, *I drank iniquity like water*, Job. xv. 16. And not only that, but was so hardened and blind, that whatsoever I read or heard of sin made no impression; and instead of working my conversion, only served to render me more guilty and more inexcusable. At length the happy time arrived, in which it pleased the *Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*, Cor. i. 3. to bestow a favorable look upon me; and the first glance presently dispersed the darkness of my soul, the very dawning of that light discovered to me the infernal monster, in whose company I had long lived unconcerned. I saw, and was immediately seized with so prodigious a fear and trembling at the sight, that I am confident as long as I have breath to live I shall never recover it.

St. Isidore of Damietta, describes this monster in surprising terms: some think, says he, that the devil was the Father of sin: and others on the contrary maintain, that sin was the father of the devil. Be it how you please, says he, I leave you to imagine, either what a father it must be of such a son; or what a son we may expect of such a father. This I must confess is black enough. But all its blackness only serves to leave us in the dark. We are not yet one jot the nigher knowing what sin is. And all that we can gather from it is, that we are never like to have it painted to the life, unless an angel undertake to draw it, and the devil sit for the picture.

The philosopher was in the right of it, when being asked the question what God is? He took first one day, then two, then three to consider of it; and after all, ingeniously confessed, that the more he thought of it, the more he found himself unable to express it. If a man should ask me the like question, what a sinner is? I should not be ashamed to own, I am not able to describe the one, no more than he was to express the other.

If God be the supreme and sovereign good, if with him all things else be good, if nothing else be good without him; we may in proportion say the same of sin. It is the supreme and sovereign evil. All things else are evil with it; nothing else is so to us without it.

If it be true that all good comes from God, as from the first and universal cause of all; the same is true of sin, which is the first and universal root of all our evils. God made heaven; sin made hell. He made the earth; sin made it miserable. He created angels in his paradise above; sin threw them down. He created man and woman in our paradise below; and sin immediately cast them out.

Consider all the torments of the damned, the cruel pains of those eternal flames, the never ceasing anguishes of their despairing rage, &c. All this, and more than you are able to conceive, is only part of the effects of sin. It was sin prepared all this, and more than this, for them and for us.

If what you only know by faith make no impression; if you be more sensible of what we suffer here, than what they suffer there; consider the revolt of all the elements against us. Fire which once was only made to serve us, now becomes the fatal instrument, our angry God makes use of to destroy and punish us: the very air we breathe infects us with diseases; and the earth we walk on trembles, opens, buries us alive. All this had never been if man had never sinned.

Consider all the miseries which famine, plague and war involve us in; the poverty of half the world, with all the hunger, thirst, cold, sickness and despair which follow it: and after all, the civil war of passion against reason; which, if well examined, will be found the greatest and most painful of our miseries; from whence proceed our ignorance and malice; and from thence all immoralities, corruptions and scandals, which we meet with in the world. All this had never been if man had never sinned.

Consider all the sad disasters you or yours have met with; all the losses you have suffered in your family, estate or friends; and all the crosses you have borne with so much pain; whatever you have undergone, you never had been subject to, your heart had never ached if man had never sinned. Accursed sin! thou first beginning, and first cause of all our mischiefs, both in this world and the next!

My God! if once we saw thee *as thou art*, we could not possibly be tepid and indifferent; the

very sight of so much goodness, would, in spite of all our passions, force us to admire, adore and love thee above all the world. Accursed sin! if once we could but see thee as thou art, the very sight of so much malice would not suffer us to love thee any longer; it would be impossible for either the world, the flesh or devil to prevail against us; we should hate thee above all things; we should then abhor, detest and abominate thee evermore. Accursed sinner! such goodness, and thou not love it! such malice, and thou not hate it!

If the eternal source of all our good be infinite in goodness, what is the first and everlasting root of all our evils? Is it not infinite malice? Questionless it is. Besides, God is not only infinite in goodness; he is infinite in wisdom, infinite in justice, infinite in all perfections whatsoever. So is sin: it is not only infinite in malice; it is also infinite in folly, infinite in all the notions we can frame of it. The treachery, disloyalty, impiety, ingratitude, presumption, pride and insolence: all this, and more than all that we can think of, all is infinite.

According to the principal which I have here laid down, if any man should ask me what a sinner is? I should not know what other name to give him. Sinner is his only name: and I can think of nothing like him, but the man related in St. Mark, v. 2. *He* is possessed with an *unclean spirit*, possessed with the devil; and which is worse, possessed with sin, the father of the devil. He is so unruly in his passions, inclinations and humours, that *no man can bind him, no, not chains.* The laws of God are his fetters, but these *he breaks in pieces*, neither is it possible for any man to tame him. If you ask his name the gospel says it is *legion*, because he is *many*, sin and sinner are two names, like that of legion: every mortal

sin is many sins; and every sinner is as many sinners. It is impossible to number all the aggravations of a mortal sin: they are as numberless as the perfections of our offended God: and therefore I shall only mention those which are the most notorious, the most obvious to common sense, and such as are most odious betwixt man and man.

A sinner! Every sinner is in every mortal sin, not only guilty of one crime, but of a legion of crimes; an ungrateful villain who betrays his benefactor; a presumptuous slave who abuses his deliverer; a proud servant who despises his master; an insolent criminal who offends before his judge's face. All these are crimes we have a horror of, when we observe them only among fellow-creatures, betwixt man and man. All these are infinitely greater betwixt man and God. And every mortal sin includes the utmost aggravations of them all.

II.

The great Ingratitude, Presumption, Pride, &c.

AN ungrateful villain. An upstart raised from less than dust. An empty thing extracted out of nothing. That such a thing as this, and so exalted as it is, should be so stupid, so insensible of all its obligations, so unmindful of the favors it receives, and so ill-natured to its greatest benefactor; who continually makes it all it is, who daily gives it all it has, to whom it owes the bread it eats, the air it breathes, the ground it goes upon, the hand it moves, the very life it spends in sin, and all the time allowed it to repent! Can such a creature, so obliged by such a benefactor, be so basely and so horribly ungrateful to betray him, and prefer before him the unreasonable satisfaction of a silly humour, of a shameful passion, or

a sinful inclination? Open once for all thy eyes, blind sinner; and confess that no ingratitude but that of Judas can be compared to thine.

A slave, I wish he were so to his master; a slave to passion and humour; a slave to sin and misery; a slave condemned to worse than the galleys during life; and afterwards to the eternal flames of hell, where *neither eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor has it* ever *entered into the heart of any man to conceive*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. what torments God's great justice has prepared for those who dare to abuse his mercy. A vile slave delivered from the mischief of all this by God himself, descending from his glory, living here a poor and painful life, and laying down the same with every drop of his most precious blood to pay the ransom of this wretch: that such a slave delivered so by such a hand, should offer to abuse the mercy which once saved him, and still holds him by a slender thread from falling into everlasting misery!

A servant, I should have said a miserable insect, full of sinful putrefaction, a vile spawn of man's original corruption, a worm, whose very crawling on its fellow dust is more preferment than it can deserve. That such a thing as this should be so proud as to despise the master of the world! So great, so wise, so infinitely perfect, and so every way deserving as he is! This vermin has indeed a soul; an angel once by grace, but now by sin a devil, black as hell itself; a Lucifer that will be *knowing good and evil*, will be *like the highest*, will pretend to govern in his master's house, despise his orders, slight his menaces, neglect his admonitions. *Be astonished, O ye heavens at this!* Jer. ii. 12.

A most insolent criminal; a criminal so insolent as to offend before God's face; in presence of his general, his king, his father, his deliverer, his be-

[b]enefactor, and his master; and besides all this, in [p]resence of his judge, before the very bar where he continually is upon his trial for his everlasting life or death. Our saviour says, John iii. 18. *That whosoever believes not, is condemned already.* We may say the same of every sinner: in the very moment he offends he is condemned already. His all-seeing Judge is always witness of his thoughts, words, actions and desires; and he no sooner is a criminal but he is tried and judged.

This insolence of his in some respect exceeds all other aggravations of his crime. It is an extravagance of which we hardly find the least example between man and man. We often hear of soldiers that desert: but whensoever they go they steal away; we never hear that they acquaint their general with such designs. We often hear of subjects that conspire against the government; but never hear them talk such matters loudly in the hearing of their prince. We often hear of murders, robberies, and many other outrages committed in the world: but when the prisoner once was brought to trial, did you ever hear he either robbed or murdered at the bar? No, no, such insolence was never heard of between man and man. And yet this very insolence is infinitely less than ours, which we are always guilty of in every mortal sin.

I say no more. I tremble at the very thought of having said so much, when I reflect how all that we can either say or think, will never convert us without grace. There is nothing but the grace of God can make a deep impression of it in our hearts.

III.

Our Saviour's Idea of Sin, and the Impression it made upon him.

OUR Saviour Jesus Christ best knew the great enormity of sin; and we may judge how great it is by the impression it made upon him; when the approaching hour of his passion laid before his eyes the terrible idea of it.

It was the first bloody scene of all his sufferings. *He began to be sorrowful and very heavy*, Matt. xxvi. 37. A deluge of grief broke in upon his soul, quite overwhelmed his heart, and lay so heavy upon his fearful thoughts he was not able to conceal it any longer, and support the pressing weight of his affliction, all alone in silence. His three most dear and most familiar disciples were surprised so much to see this sudden alteration in their dearest Lord; they were not able to enquire the cause, but like Job's three friends they stood astonished, and spoke not one word to him; *because they saw his grief was very great*, Job ii. 13.

Our Saviour could hold no longer, but broke out into this doleful expression, Matt. xxvi. 38. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.* Ah! my dear disciples! if you knew as well as I do all the motives of my grief, you would not wonder, that the very thought of them makes me look pale, and shews you the face of death in my countenance. The violent pangs of my afflicted soul are so sharp and piercing, that, did not my divinity support me, and preserve my life, I should immediately, this very moment, die upon the place, Matt. xxvi. 38. *Stay a while, and watch with me.* You who love me best, who have been always most familiar with me, be not now so unkind as to leave me in this sad condition all alone: *Stay a while,*

and watch with me, till my storm of grief blow over.

Dear christians! let us stay a while, and with these three disciples not only admire but search into the cause of this great alteration in the soul of our Redeemer. How was it possible that now he should begin to fear so much that death, which all his life he so much desired? His love for man, and his desire of dying for us, were conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost; they came into the world with him, and ever after his thoughts were fixed on them. Among his disciples, his discourse was frequently of his sufferings, the cup he was to drink, his obligation, his readiness, his desire to fulfil the prophecies, Luke xii. 50. *I have*, says he, *a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straightened till it be accomplished?* When the time drew near, he redoubled his desires of dying for us, Luke xxii. 15. *With desire, I have desired to eat this passover with you.* And why, says St. Chrysostom, because it is a preparation to my passion, which I have so long, so earnestly desired. He knew from the beginning, every torment and every degree of it: often reflected on each circumstance apart, and as often took delight in viewing all of them together. Upon mount Thabor, when the glory of his blessed soul shined through his body, like the sun through a transparent cloud, upon the dazzled eyes of his disciples, giving them a glimpse of the eternal glory we expect hereafter: out Saviour seemed as much delighted with the prospect of his passion as with all the joys of heaven: and as upon other occasions, when *his disciples prayed him to eat*, John iv. 31, he told them, *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work;* so when they desired him to stay, and *make tabernacles*,

it was his joy and delight to *talk with* Moses *and* Elias *of his decease*, his passion *which he should accomplish at* Jerusalem.

Ah christians! you have reason to admire and wonder that the God of all your comfort is now heavy and disconsolate: but you will fear and tremble, more than wonder, if you seriously reflect, that all his grief proceeded chiefly from the terrible idea he had of sin; not his but ours. St. Jerom says, his greatest grief proceeded not from fear of suffering, because he came to suffer; but he chiefly grieved for Judas, for the scandal of the apostles, and the reprobation of the people, &c.

This agrees exactly with our Saviour's words, Luke xxiii. 27, 28. to those who followed him to calvary; when turning *to the women who lamented him*, he said, *daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.* Weep not for me, my torments will be short; weep for yourselves; your torment, if you do not weep, repent, and mend, will be eternal. Alas! the torments which I willingly and freely suffer for your sake are nothing to the pains of hell, which you for ever will endure, unless by penitential tears, mixed with my blood, you wash away your sins. *If they do thus in the green wood, what will they do in the dry?* If I, though innocent, suffer thus for your sins, you who are guilty, what are you like to suffer for your own? If I, who am true God, the only beloved Son of my eternal Father, who never offended him; if because I interpose betwixt you and his justice, I am thus severely treated; what will become of miserable creatures, grievous sinners, who so often have offended him, if they do not join their tears with mine; if they are not afflicted with me for their sins for which I die upon the cross? *Every*

soul who upon this day is not afflicted shall perish, Lev. xxiii. 29. Every soul who thinks upon this day, and is not afflicted with his dying Saviour, is not heartily afflicted for those sins for which he dies, shall certainly perish.

Neither does it contradict what is commonly said, that one great difference between our Saviour and his martyrs was, that by a miracle of grace he gave them that undaunted courage, which by a greater miracle he now refused to himself. It is true he freely suffered in himself the natural fear of death; to shew himself true man as well as God; to let us see at once the weakness of our nature, and the power of grace; and comfort us by making it appear, that such infirmities of nature are not sins as long as reason governs them, and resignation to submit to the will of God. But yet there is another very great difference betwixt his case and theirs. Martyrs who die for God's sake are secure of their success; they are sure not to suffer in vain, they are certain to possess all they desire, and to enjoy eternally their God, to whom they sacrifice their lives. This is the reason why martyrs look death boldly in the face; with open arms receive it, and go to meet it with the same assurance as if they went to heaven. Let the body suffer the worst of pains, the soul is unconcerned, the soul is secure of God, the soul is in heaven before-hand. When man dies to enjoy God, he is sure he shall enjoy him. But, alas! it is not so when Jesus dies for man. He dies to gain his love; and at the same time knows, that he will prove ungrateful. He dies to enjoy him in heaven, and foresees he will be damned to all eternity. The lively apprehension of his torments altogether, was enough to make him sorrowful even to death; but however, if he could have promised himself the eternal salvation of all those

dear-bought souls for which he died, the joyful assurance of so happy a success, would have eased the burden of his grief, and his torments would have been welcome upon that condition. But to sweat blood in vain, to be scourged to no purpose, to spend the last drop of his sacred blood to no effect, was an affliction not to be supported, without praying his eternal father to have pity and compassion on him: *Father, if it be possible,* dispense at least with this part of my sentence, let me die; but do not let me die in vain.

It is said of Joseph, in the book of Genesis. *He kissed all his brethren, and wept over every one of them.* I may say the same of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane: he grieved for all his brethren, and wept over every one of them in particular. He saw before his eyes the sins of every person in the world; the grace which he would from time to time bestow upon us, the neglect of all his offers, and abuse of all his favors. He foresaw every temptation which we yield to, and grieved to see it. He foresaw each profanation of the sacrament, which we frequent unworthily, and fainted with grief, when he thought how often his most precious blood would, by our fault, become the poison of our souls. He foresaw, in the whole course of our lives, where, when, and how, we would resist, and render ineffectual all the directions, admonitions, and exhortations of his ministers, and fell into a bloody sweat at the very thought of our ingratitude. by which the chief means of attaining everlasting happiness serve only in the end to justify our sentence of eternal misery. *He bore our griefs. he carried our sorrows, he took upon him the iniquities of us all;* and every one of our most grievous sins appeared to him in a more hideous shape than ever it appeared to any creature.

Mortal sin is the greatest of evils. It separates us from God, and leaves our souls empty of every good. So that, as God is infinitely good, the malice of a mortal sin is infinitely bad. As none of us can understand the infinite goodness of the one, so none of us are able to conceive the infinite malice of the other. Christ himself as God, comprehended them both; as man, he comprehended neither. But yet the clear and full idea he had of it, was proportioned to his beatific vision of God's essence, and by consequence the perfectest that ever was. His clear sight, and ardent love of God, were in a manner infinite; so were his knowledge and his hatred of mortal sin. The impression this idea made upon him was the chief, if not the only reason, why our Saviour could not hold from telling his disciples. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* His soul was overwhelmed with such a deluge of affliction, that his grief, not being able to contain itself within the bounds of nature, violently forced itself through all his pores in tears of blood.

Ah, my dear Jesus! when shall I be able to make such a perfect act of true contrition for my sins as thou hast made for mine? when shall I be able to say, *my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!* when shall I lament my grievous sins in tears of blood! Jer. ix. i. *Give me*, at least, *water to my head, and fountains to my eyes.* No contrite heart but thine, bleeds otherways than at the eyes; and it is, I hope, enough for me, if I can be so sorry for my sins as to lament them all the days I have to live, and rather die than ever sin again.

IV.

The Saints' Idea of Sin. How much it humbles them.

THERE is nothing but the grace of Jesus Christ can make us saints. There is nothing else can make us clearly see, and heartily detest the malice of our sins. The greater share we have of this great grace, the more we see sin and detest it; so much more we fear and tremble at the very thought of it; and as our grace encreases, we grow every day more humble by remembering it.

To make this out, I need not write the lives of all the saints. A pattern is enough to judge of all the piece, especially such a one as St. John Climacus, an ancient father of the church, has left behind him. He assures us his relation is no fable; he affirms, that what he relates he saw with his own eyes; and that he was a whole month in their company.

Draw near, says he, all ye who have provoked the wrath of God by your offences; come and hear the wonders he was pleased to let me see for my edification; be attentive to my words, all you who have a mind to reconcile yourselves to God, by a sincere conversion.

When I was, says he, in the monastry of penitents, I saw men so extremely humbled with the grievous weight of their offences, that their cries and prayers to God would even move the stones themselves. With heads bowed down, and eyes upon the ground, I heard them say, we confess, O Lord, we confess that we deserve to suffer all chastisements and afflictions; because our sins are such, that should we summon all the universe to weep for us, the tears of the world would never make sufficient satisfaction. There remains one only thing we ask, one only thing we pray for,

Psal. vi. 1. *that thou never mayest correct us in thy anger, nor chastise us in thy great displeasure;* but spare us a little through thy infinite mercy. It is enough, o Lord, that thou deliver us from those inexplicable torments hidden in the centre of the earth. We dare not ask a full and perfect pardon: we, who have not kept the holy laws of our profession, but have broken them again, even when thou hadst given us the most endearing marks of love and mercy in forgiving our sins.

Who ever saw them laugh? who ever heard among them any idle talk? who ever could observe them transported by any passion, or moved by any anger? Alas! they hardly knew what anger was; their great affliction and continual grief had now extinguished in them all emotions of resentment. There was never known the least appearance of dispute; the least lashing out in discourse; the least sign of vain glory. There was no jollity of feasting, no concern for the body, no love of ease and pleasure, no thought of wine, no use of fruits, no care for delicacies to please the palate. The desire of all such things was quite extinct. Moreover, there was not to be found the least censoriousness, or least appearance of an inclination to judge their neighbours.

Some of them now and then would knock their breasts; and, as if they were already at the gate of heaven, would say, open us, o judge of mankind, open us the gate of happiness, which we have shut by sin. Others would say, Luke i. 79. *Give light to us, o Lord, who sit in darkness and in the shades of death, and guide our steps into the way of peace.* Others again; will the Almighty look upon us any more? Is it possible to pay our debts, and satisfy for our offences? Will our God once more afford us any comfort? We are

laid in chains of sin, and shall we one day hear him say, come forth?

They always had the hour of death before their eyes; and sometimes they would say to one another, what will then become of us? what sentence will our God pronounce upon us? what will be our end? Shall we be then called home from banishment, to which we have been hitherto condemned for our offences? Shall such criminals as we find any favor then? Such sinners as we are, such miserable wretches, covered with confusion and darkness. Have our prayers mounted to the throne of God? Or, have they been rejected as they well deserve? If well received, how far have they prevailed? Have they obtained a full discharge, or only a part? Alas! they could not have much force, proceeding from such mouths, so sinful and impure as ours.

At other times they thus discoursed of their fears and doubts: what think you brethren? do you think that we advance? do you think that we obtain the effect of our demands? do you think that God will once again receive us? do you think he will open us the gates of heaven? Who can tell, say the Ninevites, but God may change the sentence which he has pronounced against us? Though perhaps, he will not free us from the rigorous chastisements which we have deserved. However, let us labor all we can, and do whatever we are able. If he opens us the gate of heaven we are happy; if he does not, he is just: and therefore, never let us cease to bless him. Doubtful as we are of what may be our destiny, we must continue all our life still knocking at the door. Perhaps our importunity, our constancy, and our perseverance may find admittance in the end.

Behold the language of the saints! consider how

their fear and trembling humble them in presence of their angry God. Consider the idea which they have of sin; how different it is from what we generally have. Consider the impression which it makes upon them, and compare it with the stupidity, hardness and insensibility of our hearts. Conclude with shame and sorrow that this difference between them and us proceeds not from their having been much greater sinners than we are, but from our being much less saints than they.

When any of those penitents drew nigh the hour of death, how terrible, how lamentable was the spectacle! These blessed criminals, when any one of their companions was upon the point of leaving them, all surrounded him with aching hearts, and weeping eyes, to ask him how do you find yourself, dear brother, dear companion in our miseries and sufferings? what say you now? what do you hope? what do you think? have you obtained what you have labored for with so much pain? or, is your labor lost? are you arrived at the port? or, are you not? have you a full assurance of your happiness? or, have you only an uncertain hope? do you find yourself in perfect liberty of mind? or, are you yet in trouble and anxiety? have you heard already, in the secret of your soul, a voice which tells you your *sins are forgiven* you? or, do you seem to hear that formidable sentence, Ps. ix. 17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell?* What say you, brother? tell us, we conjure you, tell us now sincerely; that by knowing what condition you are in at present, we may guess what state we may be in one day ourselves.

To these demands some of these dying penitents made answer, Ps. lxvi. 20. *Blessed be God, who has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.* Others in a doleful tone, replied, Ps.

cxxiii. 4. *Can our soul go over the streams of water, which are like to overwhelm us?* This they said, not being yet assured of their salvation; but considering with fear and trembling, what might happen to them in that terrible account which now was nigh at hand. And others answered more uncomfortably; woe be to the soul that hath not kept inviolably all the laws of its profession. See, the hour is come, the only hour in which we shall begin to know our state for all eternity.

These blessed penitents for one relapse did penance, the severest they were able to invent: and we, for numberless relapses, many of them worse than theirs, do none at all. These penitents persevered in the same austerities till death, their penance had no end: we still persevere in our sins, our penance never begins. Their fear and trembling, their profound humility went hand in hand with all their penance and perseverance: our confidence and unconcernedness, our extravagant presumption always keep an equal pace with our tepidity and slothfulness. Dear christians, give me leave to ask, why all this difference betwixt them and us? a thousand years between their age, and this which now we live in, have they altered the Almighty? has he less authority to punish us? or we less obligation to obey him, honor him, and make him satisfaction if we do not? is our God less just because we more abuse his mercy? or more merciful because we less regard his justice? Alas! our blindness is the only reason: we are blinder than they were; and therefore we are more easy, more unconcerned, more proud, more tepid, and more slothful.

Jesu, son of David, have mercy on me, Thou blessed Saviour of the world, *who enlightenest every man that cometh into it,* open once my

eyes, and keep them ever open, that I may continually see and love thy goodness, wisdom, mercy and justice; and by the assistance of so great a grace, perpetually see and hate the malice of my sins. There is nothing but thy grace that can enlighten every man that cometh into the world: there is nothing else can clear my understanding and inflame my heart: there is nothing else can make me truly contrite, truly humble. *Jesu, son of* David, *have mercy on me a sinner*, who am not in the way, nor going on, but *sitting by the way-side, begging* thy assistance. Here I sit and wait thy passing by: my blindness hinders me from doing any more: and even when I hear thee pass, I know not how to follow thee. The croud of all my passions, inclinations and humours, and the multitude of my enagements, cares and troubles, make a noise about me; such a one I fear as will not let thee hear me. When I offer to cry out for help they try to stop my mouth, and bid me *hold my peace*. And therefore I cry out *the more, Jesu, son of* David, *have mercy on me*. Thou needest not *stand to ask* me what I want, or *what I will that thou shouldst do unto me*. Thou who knowest my wants so infinitely better than myself. The only favor which I humbly beg, is, *that* I *may receive my sight*. Say only to my soul, as once thou saidst to that blind man who was a figure of me; *receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee*; say but this, thy words are powerful, and make themselves prove true. Say only this, and then *immediately* I shall *receive my sight and follow thee*. I then shall follow thy example, I shall follow thy disciples, and thy saints. I then shall do fit penance for my sins, and shall persevere in it to the end. I then shall study how to punish every passion, inclination and humour, which induced me to offend thee. I shall then be truly contrite, truly humble;

I shall *glorify thee* all my life, *and all the people when they see* the happy change, shall *give praise to God.* Amen.

THE CHARACTER OF

A GOOD CHRISTIAN

SECT. I.

The Perfection of his Duty.

WHOEVER seriously professes the religion of Christ, and takes the gospel for the rule of that divine religion, making it his business to acquire that sanctity which Jesus Christ demands of his disciples, is a christian. The gospel was not only written for those we call religious. We are all of us religious persons; of the best and first of all religions, which is that of Jesus Christ. We have a rule, a habit, and a founder; we have vows and exercises. Christ first instituted and established our religion: he is the founder of our order. Innocence and sanctity make up the habit we receive in baptism. Our promises of renouncing all the pomps and works of satan, are our vows. The gospel is our rule; our prayers, penances, and generally all good actions are our exercises.

Do you think the gospel was not written, says St. Basil, precisely as much for married persons as for monks? undoubtedly it is by this rule that both are to be judged. It is well if married people can obtain God's pardon for the faults committed in that state. In all things else, they are as much

obliged to live like saints, as the religious are. The ties of marriage, and engagements of the world, will never justify an idle life; or any way dispense with the laborious task of living like a christian. It is lawful to live in the world; but not to live according to the maxims of it. On the contrary, the more we are exposed to the temptations of the devil, so much more we are obliged to use our utmost care and vigilance. Believe not, says St. Chrysostom, that God expects from worldly men, a sanctity quite different from that of monks. It is true, indeed, that those may marry, and these may not: but in all things else the case is equal. They have both received the same laws, and both are subject to the same punishments. When Jesus laid his curse upon the rich, and those who lead a jolly life in sensuality and pleasure, when he spoke of the evangelical beatitudes; he spoke not only to religious, but to all the faithful, and without the least exception. He was never heard to say, that the religious man shall suffer for his sins, but not the secular. The difference we fancy in this point, is only an invention of men; it is not grounded in the word of God, who equally obliges all that will be saved to keep his laws. St. Paul addressing his discourse to married persons, requires of them as great a share of sanctity as we can find in the most perfect monks. What disengagement does he not prescribe to all of us! what moderation in our cloths, our diet, and our use of riches! 1 Tim. 68. *Having food*, says he, *and raiment let us be contented*, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. *They who are married; let them be as if they were not; and they who use the world as if they used it not;* What more can we expect from those we call religious? Let us therefore never say, that worldly men are either not obliged, or else not able to ob-

serve the rules of christianity; and that religious only can attain to such sublime perfection. There is nothing so pernicious as this false opinion. It maintains the greatest part of libertines in their disorders, and encourages imperfect souls to lead a loose and lazy life. Assure yourselves, our God requires of all the same sanctity. The means of our arriving to it may be different; but yet religious persons have no other aim than we have. They design to save themselves by the narrow way; and we shall never be saved by walking in the broad one.

Hence it follows clearly, that the gospel being preached and made for all, we all are bound to follow it; we all must labor to acquire the sanctity demanded by it; we must all be thoroughly persuaded, that it is the only way which leads to heaven; and that every other way is sure to end in everlasting death. It is true the methods and exercises which are used, and followed in religious houses, to arrive at such perfection, are quite different from what are usually prescribed to worldly persons: but their virtues always are the same, although their exercises are not. These two things we commonly confound; namely, the exercises and virtues of a Christian. We imagine, for example, that a modest and homely dress is only fit for Cloisters, where they always wear a certain habit, poor and plain. We fancy that the recollection which is practised in religious houses, is a thing peculiar to their character; because we find, that they only have certain hours allotted them for keeping silence. We imagine also, that a penitential life belongs to none but them; because they fast, and practise several austerities commanded by superiors. It is a great mistake; these virtues all are evangelical: we find them in the gospel, which is ours as much as theirs: they are

prescribed to all men, by the common rule of Christianity: and though we have not, as religious have, so great advantages to make the practice of them uniform and easy; nevertheless, we all are indispensibly obliged to have them, and to practise them. Our modesty, our moderation must be known to all as well as theirs. Our recollection of mind must be preserved, amidst the multitude of our employments. We are equally obliged to mortify and circumcise our heart, and to extinguish in it all our sensual desires, the precept of continual prayer is as much for us as for them. We are not bound to sing in choir at certain hours as they do; but our heart must be as much as theirs, continually united to our God, by loving him above all things. Though we have not made a vow of poverty, yet we must be, as well as they, entirely disengaged from all the riches of the earth, and never set our hearts upon them whilst we use them. Though we have not vowed obedience, we are all obliged as much as they to be attentive to the precepts of our founder Jesus Christ, and punctually observe the least of his commandments.

Behold the duty of a christian! See how generous, how noble, how heroic his resolutions are, of making good the full significations of his name! He meets with an infinity of obstacles; but notwithstanding all, he is resolved to sacrifice and save himself: he is resolved to use all violence, whatever may be requisite, to make his way to heaven, and to *take it even by force*, Matt. xi. 12.

SECT. II.

His Contempt of the World.

HE always looks upon himself as a mere stranger in this world; and the continual remembrance of his being so, is the foundation

and root of all his virtue. He takes little pleasure in employing his busy thoughts about this life, and the affairs relating to it; but is like a banished man, who lives uneasy in a foreign country; always looking homeward with extreme impatience, to see the blessed place which gave him birth; and always doing all he can to have all things in readiness for his return. He is never cast down by adversity, nor puft up by the prosperity which attend his fortune here; but passes unconcernedly by, without regarding either; and without the least stop in his way, pursues his journey like a traveller who longs to be at home, and thinks of nothing else, but how to make haste thither. And this is the reason why our God obliges him to say, in his daily prayer, *thy kingdom come;* that he may always have before his eyes the happy day which is to be the last, and generously scorn to value any transitory honor, profit or pleasure, which he meets with upon earth.

A christian, by these noble sentiments of true and solid wisdom, mounts to such a height above the reach of all this world, that he is hardly capable of feeling, much less of admiring whatsoever passes in it. He is like a man, who, from the top of an aspiring mountain, takes a view of all below him, and can hardly see the towns and cities which appear like mole-hills; where the numerous inhabitants, like swarms of ants, run up and down, and follow eagerly their little trade of hoarding up a petty treasure, which is nothing to his purpose. All his treasure and his heart are both in heaven. There his longing eye is generally fixed; and if he now and then look down upon the riches, glory, power and honor of this miserable world, they all seem trifling matters; all such things are little, inconsiderable, and contemptible to him.

And yet he cannot justly be accused of pride, because he thinks the wisest politicians are but fools; their riches, shadows, and all their pleasures dreams; and their titles, dignities and honors, only childrens' baubles. No, it cannot justly be accounted pride. It is certainly the greatest wisdom to submit our judgments, and conform them to the eternal truth of God himself, and judge of things as they are truly in themselves: or otherwise we must allow, that Solomon himself was guilty of presumption and arrogance, when after a full trial, after long and sad experience, he pronounced that all the world is vanity of vanities, and nothing else but vanity.

He labors all he can to make his soul become a heaven upon earth; and fails not to succeed in such a noble enterprise. The heaven which we see and admire is but an emblem of his happiness. As heaven is enlightened by the rising sun, his soul is more enlightened by the grace of God, the sun of justice, which arises without setting in his heart. As heaven always is the same; still beautiful and bright within itself, although the midnight darkness seem to alter and obscure it; so his soul is still the same; it is always easy and content within itself, although he live obscurely in disgrace or poverty, and seem a miserable man to those who little understand the secret of his happiness. As heaven is so high above the winds and storms that the most violent disturbance of the air can never reach it; so the soul of a good christian, even when the world combines to make him suffer most, receives no harm at all. His treasure is in heaven, and his heart is with it. He is above the reach of all that they can do. His heart is raised to such a height, that when he takes a prospect of the earth below, he sees no difference between men and pismires,

Neither are the poor the only objects that seem little in his sight; but kings themselves, and generals of armies, politicians, usurers, and what you please, seem every jot as little and contemptible as they. The difference of poor and rich makes no impression upon him; no more than when he sees amongst a swarm of little ants, some creep loaded, and others empty.

What can men do to such a man as this, suppose they have a mind to make him miserable? Will they rob him of his money? all his riches are in heaven. Will they banish him from home? he has no other home but heaven; and it is not in their power to banish him from thence. Will they lay him fast in chains? his conscience will still be free: and for his part, he fears no other chains but those of sin; or will they kill him? when they have done this they have no more to do; and even then his soul will live for ever, and his body one day rise again.

A man who lives not but for Jesus Christ, is quite above the reach of all misfortunes that can threaten him; provided he will not freely and deliberately hurt himself, no man alive can have the least advantage over him. The loss of his goods is no affliction to him, because he well considers that we all bring nothing with us at our birth; and we shall carry nothing with us at our death. The vain desires of reputation and honor cannot seize his heart; because he knows that all our conversation ought to be in heaven. All the injuries and outrages he meets with are not able to provoke him; he is a christian: and being truly such, he fears but one great danger, one only loss; the danger of offending God and losing his favor; all things else as banishment and poverty, with all the greatest and most dangerous extremities he values not at all; and even death itself

which others think so terrible, is always most agreeable, most comfortable, and most welcome to him.

SECT. III.

His Desire of Heaven.

THE scripture generally represents a christian, as a person disengaged and separated from the world. *If you were of the world*, says our Saviour, Jo. xv. 19. *the world would love his own; but because you are not of the world and I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you*, 1 Jo. ii. 15. He *loves not the world, nor the things that are in the world*, because, *if any man love the world, the love of God is not in him*, Rom. xii. 2. He is *not conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of his mind, that he may prove what is the good, the acceptable and perfect will of God*, 1 Cor. vii. 31. He *uses the world as if he used it not*. Gal. vi. 14. *The world is crucified to him, and he is to the world*, Colos. iii. 3. He *is dead, and his life is hid with Christ in God*, Jam. i. 27. His *religion pure and undefiled*, is that by which he *keeps himself unspotted from the world*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. He *abstains from all desires which war against the soul*, because he is a stranger and a pilgrim in the world. But that which most inclines him to desire the happiness of heaven, is his knowing, that as long as he is here he is absent from his God.

No wonder he so much desires to be in heaven; all his comfort is his hope of being there. The gate so strait; the way so narrow; the continual violence so necessary to be used: the cross he daily bears; the self-denial which he always practises. The penance, without which we all shall perish, if we do not mortify our passions, curb our

humors, and resist our inclinations: all this put together is enough to make a christian life so painful, troublesome and disagreeable; that, 1 Cor. xv. 19. *If in this life only he had hope,* he would *of all men be most miserable.*

It is no wonder therefore he so much desires the sight of God, which only can deliver him from all the miseries he labors under. It is the great affliction of the just; to see themselves so far from Sion, separated from their God, and banished from their heavenly Jerusalem. Although the riches of the world were all their own, they still would think themselves unfortunate, because their treasure is not here; it is only to be found hereafter. They as earnestly desire the happines of heaven, as a hart long hunted thirsts for water. It is a duty indispensibly incumbent upon all true christians, to desire it above all things.

Hear St. Austin: he who finds himself at ease on earth, who is contented to live always here, and finds the greatest joy and satisfaction in this world, will never enter heaven. If you ask the reason, it is because he has not in his heart the love of God, whoever does not sigh, and above all things wish for the enjoyment of eternal life. Examine well your heart. If God should promise you a long life upon earth, and tell you, you shall here enjoy whatever you can wish for; riches, pleasures, honors, health, prosperity, and what you please beside, shall every where attend you; only you shall never see me; you shall never have a share with me in heaven: would you be content? Whoever is in such a disposition, does not begin to love him above all things.

Hear the royal prophet: hear the language of his love. As the heart pants after water so my soul pants after thee my God My soul is thirsty for thee, o thou living God, the only life and

comfort of my soul. My tears have been my entertainment day and night; and it is the only ease of my impatient grief to have the liberty of weeping in thy absence. When shall I appear before my God? when once that happy day approaches, when I once behold thy face, I shall be satisfied, but never shall be satisfied till then. It is this, and only this one thing I always have desired of thee, that I may dwell in thy house for ever, and behold thy beauty.

All God's children say the same; they daily pray to their eternal Father, that his kingdom may come; and their desire of everlasting life, though sometimes out of mind, is always in their heart. By this they pray incessantly. By this they are attentive to God's presence, in the midst of those employments and affairs, which otherwise would easily divert them from the thoughts of him. By this they frequently recal their wandering thoughts, renew their decaying fervor, inflame their cooling love, encourage their desponding hearts, and march a great deal faster towards heaven. When the scripture commands us, says St. Austin, to pray always; we are not therefore obliged to be always on our knees, or always singing psalms in choir: we only are obliged to have continually in the bottom of our hearts a true desire to leave this earth, and enter into heaven. This continual desire must still persevere in our heart. We always must lament, and sigh, and say, I am a captive and a pilgrim, I am far from home, I am not with my God. It is true, St. Austin adds, a just man may divert himself sometimes, and spend some hours in such employments as appear quite different from gaining heaven. It is, alas! the servitude of his captivity which thus obliges him to work for the Egyptians, whilst he is a slave to Pharaoh. But however, in the midst of all this

slavery he never can forget the land of promise; he laments, he sighs, he always wishes to be there: and thus he always prays to God that he will please to grant him the possession of that sovereign good, which alone can suffice to make him truly and for ever happy.

Visa approbatione eximii ac perlustris Domini, *** Presbyteri, S. Theologiæ Doctoris, *** approbo ego librum anglicano idiomate compositum, cui titulus est, *A Contrite and Humble Heart; with motives and considerations to prepare it.* D. D. 16 Martii. 1693.

N. J. DELA V. *S.T. Doctor & Prof. Prim. Libr. Visitator & Censor, & pro temp. V. D. Rector.*



THE

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LOVE OF JESUS

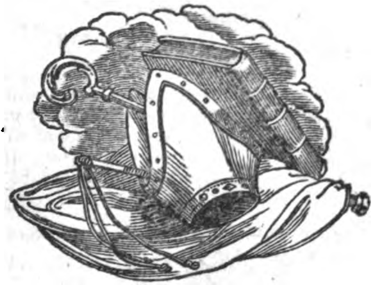
in the

Adorable Sacrament

of the

ALTAR.

A new Translation from the French of Henry-Mary Boudon.



Manchester:

Printed by R. and W. Dean and Co. Market-street-lane,

FOR T. HAYDOCK.

1801.

PREFACE.

THE known piety of the author of the following treatises, the excellence of the subject, namely, *The love of Jesus in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar*, and the tender devotion with which the motives and practices are laid down, to promote the love of our amiable Saviour, are reasons, which it is hoped, will make it a valuable acquisition to english catholics. So great was the esteem for this little book, in the country where it was written, that it was fastened by a chain to the great altar of the church of Evreux, that none of the faithful might be deprived of the advantage of reading it. Nevertheless, as great allowances must be made for the customs and usages of different kingdoms, and since the liberty of religious worship cannot be supposed to be the same here as in catholic countries, it has been found necessary to curtail certain passages which are deemed less useful, and to omit others as quite foreign to the purpose. The subjects left out are chiefly from among the practices, viz. Pange lingua, and the litany of the blessed sacrament from the *Double Manual*; the manner of assisting at processions; the two chapters on the priesthood and benefices, and the first chapter, except the introduction, on the perpetual adoration: with a sketch of which, however, we shall present our readers. It consists in a number of holy persons enrolling themselves, (each fixing upon the hour which is most convenient) to adore the blessed sacrament by turns. They begin their adorations at twelve o'clock and continue them till night, when the same devotion is taken up by religious houses of both sexes who persevere in it until morning, then succeed the masses of the priests, and the attend-

ance of the people till noon, when the same round recommences; and thus the divine sacrament is never without faithful adorers, who render it their homage and respects, and try to make reparation for the many enormities and excesses committed against the God of all love, asking pardon and weeping bitterly over such manifold crimes, the least of which should cause the death of all men, and the total destruction of the world: repeating again and again, o how good, how infinitely good is the God whom we adore, not to have annihilated us, how surprizing to see the world continue, after such a depth of malice. O love, o love! how admirable art thou, yet how little known. So far the venerable Boudon, from which may be collected, that although we cannot practice this devotion in the extent to which it is carried in catholic countries, we may at least regret our inability, and supply, by private devotions, our want of public opportunity. It will be no hard matter, for example, to go a little earlier to chapel every Sunday, and to dedicate ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, to make some kind of amends, for the many abuses, sacrileges and profantions committed against the infinite majesty of God, in the divine eucharist: if this be too much, we may turn ourselves every morning when we arise towards some chapel, where the blessed sacrament is kept, and say: *Praised for ever be the adorable sacrament of the altar*; for love, according to the remark of our author, is rich in a thousand holy inventions, to honor and cause to be honored her best-beloved. Only love and every thing will be easy. With regard to the translation, simplicity and a close adherence to the sense have been chiefly aimed at, even the very turn of the phrase, as bearing the stamp of a most tender piety, has been preserved as much as possible.

GOD ALONE.

Prayer by Way of Dedication.

TO THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD.

GREAT queen of heaven, where divine love reigns in the plenitude of its perfections; amiable princess of the seraphim, holy mother of love, who began to love, from the instant you received your existence, whose precious and chaste heart, that virginal, faithful and incomparable heart, that heart so loving and so beloved, that heart of love, which, from the first moment of your most pure and immaculate conception, has burnt in the sacred fires of pure love, the flames of which even at first burst forth incredibly brighter than those of all other divine lovers even when in their highest degree of perfection: behold me at your feet as in the presence of my dear mistress, my good mother and the sweet governess of my heart, offering to your love a gift due to you, in honor of that tender love, which your divine son, the adorable Jesus bore to you, his mother: for you know, o most divine virgin, most sweet Mary, that, for this time past, all my thoughts, words and actions, all the motions of my soul have been entirely dedicated to you for the honor and glory

of God alone, desiring every moment of my life to adore him; who, by your means has wrought such wonders. Receive therefore, most excellent Mary, these thoughts, which it has pleased the God of love to inspire me with; every one of which is consecrated to love. May your maternal heart obtain of your divine son a holy abundance of graces for all those who shall read this small book, that their hearts and mind, dying to the love of creatures, may live henceforward to God alone, and for God alone. Amen.

GOD ALONE.

To her Highness Mademoiselle de Bouillon.

Mademoiselle,

IT is with justice I dedicate to you what is due to your merit, your piety alone being the cause of my composing this little volume for the sole honor and glory of Jesus in the most holy sacrament, that mystery of adoration and love, the object of your most tender affections and sweetest delight. When I saw a lady of your rank arrive at the town of Evreux, seeming to have no other motive in your journey, but to take care of the affairs of Jesus Christ, to support his divine interest, to procure new respect and adorations to this divine Saviour in the most holy sacrament; I thought that an arch-deacon, obliged by his ministry to

speak in the house of God, should let his voice be heard among the people to encourage them more and more to a devotion at once so just, so necessary and so useful. This has been our endeavour in our visit of all the parish churches of the diocese. But as your zeal pressed me to obtain of my lord, our late prelate, the establishment of a special devotion to the most holy sacrament in many of our parishes, I have also been entreated to suggest, to the faithful adorers of Jesus in this mystery of consummate love, a few motives or subjects for reflection; as also some practices, with which they might entertain themselves in his divine presence. This I have done with my usual simplicity; for it suffices if God alone be honored, for my part I ought only to desire infinite confusion, which alone is my desert. Continue, Mademoiselle, to edify our churches, to walk in the pious foot-steps of the late duchess of Bouillon, your much respected mother. The love she always bore the church, the respect she so openly testified for the sovereign pontiff, its head and pastor, declaring that she was ready to expose her life in support of his authority, and that, rather than be a witness to the least disobedience to the holy apostolic see, she would willingly lose every thing she held most dear in this world; this forces me truly to say that she lived by faith. But scarce had we leisure to reflect on the inestimable treasure we possessed in this pious and catholic princess, before heaven snatched her from us to the great regret of all that knew her. What consoles us in our sorrow is, that heaven has made your virtuous mother survive in the person of your Highness. Her faith continues to live in your heart, dedicated and consecrated to this mystery of our faith, the most holy sacrament. I intreat the God of all goodness, by the most loving heart of the blessed virgin, that the same Jesus, who resides

among us veiled under the sacramental species of bread and wine, the object of your affections and adorations, may be the same to you in the life to come, revealing himself to your soul such as he is, surrounded with greatness and glory. This is the prayer of one who is with the most profound respect, *Miss,*

Your highness'

Most humble and most obedient servant,

Henry-Mary Boudon, the last of men.

A GENERAL CONVOCATION

of all the faithful of the diocese of Evreux, to the love and adoration of the most holy sacrament of the altar.

I came to send fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled, Luc. xii. 49. Some of the holy fathers commenting on that part of scripture, which teaches us that at the beginning of the world the *Spirit of God moved over the waters,* Gen. i. assert that this was both to render them fruitful and instruct us, that, as the hen by sitting on her eggs, brings forth young, which resemble herself; in like manner, that divine spirit who is not only the love of holy love, but also love itself, by residing in a special manner among his creatures, produces in them divine love; thus every created thing, if duly considered, forcibly presses us to love the divine goodness.

This made St. Bonaventure say, that we were surrounded on all sides by the fire and flames of divine love. Pliny, after having considered the great number and diversity of fires to be found in nature, assures us that it is a kind of miracle that a single day should pass without the world taking fire, and being involved in flames. This observation is still more true in the order of grace. But is it not surprising above expression that, encompassed on every side by the sacred flames of divine love,

when every creature ought to be to the christian soul like so many furnaces burning with holy love, our hearts still remain frozen and insensible?

But, that men might be without excuse in their coldness, the adorable Jesus descended to light up new fires by enriching us with new graces, particularly by the institution of the holy sacrament of the altar, wherein his love shines forth to such an excess, that either our hearts must renounce their nature, or be consumed in this furnace of divine love. For this reason St. Catharine of Sienna, one of his most faithful lovers, was favored with a vision in which the most holy Sacrament of the altar appeared to her like a furnace of infinite love, from whence she clearly perceived torrents of sacred fire issue forth, whose pure flames spread themselves in such a manner that she remained stricken with astonishment that every heart was not quite transformed into the love of so loving a God.

A holy nun, of the same order as that illustrious lover of the son of God, found herself happily surrounded with these flames, when perceiving the divine ardor had seized her heart, she run about exclaiming to the sisters, fire! fire! fire! I am burning: the pure love of Jesus my God entirely consumes me.

The same thing, o christian souls, I desire to do not only for the present moment, but every day of my miserable life. I will call out with all my force, and would to heaven, I may be heard, fire! fire! not, alas! because the flames of God's love burn our souls too forcibly, but because our hearts are not inflamed by these heavenly sparks. We all know that when a house takes fire, the bells ring, and every one hastens to contribute his endeavours to extinguish it. The case is not the

same with divine love. I am come said the son of God, the son of Mary, to bring it from heaven to the earth, and what do I desire but that it should burn?

Come, therefore, o faithful souls, run in crowds, not to extinguish, but to enkindle this fire. The dignity of arch-deacon, to which it has pleased God to raise me, his unworthy servant, through the favor of the most blessed Virgin, to whom, after Jesus, I owe all the graces which I receive from the divine bounty, imposes upon me an indispensable obligation to do all in my power, by virtue of the grace of Jesus Christ, to make this heavenly fire burn on every side. For this reason, the visits which we make, ought to have no other object in view than that which the amiable Jesus proposed to himself in his; which, being directed solely to promote the love of God in the hearts of those whom he visited in the bowels of his tender mercy, ought to serve as a model in those visits, which the arch-deacons make by order of the church.

But when I consider what God performs in his visits which are continued to us in the most blessed sacrament; when, upon reflecting on that excess of love which he bears mankind, I see him all alone in the parish churches of the country, so little kown by the greatest part of persons, who live in profound ignorance; so little loved, and yet so loving; I must confess I do not know where I am, I perceive my spirit and my heart fail me at the sight of such infinite love of my sovereign; and happy I am to declare it to all men, at the same time that I acknowledge my own enormous ingratitude. Surely I must have a heart harder than the very rocks to be able to live, and not rather to die for love, at the sight of the inconceivable goodness of the amiable Jesus in the most

holy sacrament, which I have so frequently witnessed in my visits.

Weep, ye who read these things, shed tears over my many insensibilities, and over the misery of my frozen heart, send forth bitter sighs on seeing the God of love so little loved.

But, o my Lord, what are you doing? O infinite greatness, how far do you forget yourself to entrust to a wretched creature the care of your adorable body, and of the tabernacles in which you reside? O my heart, it is time thou shouldst be thoroughly sensible to the love of thy God. Yes, I will disown and reject thee, if thou do not dispose thyself, through the favor of the blessed Virgin, to receive so many wounds of divine love as will cause thy death.

O faithful souls! how irksome are the days of our pilgrimage to be forced to see the small number of souls faithfully subject to the reign of the love of Jesus! It is with this view that I am prevailed on to deliver to you a few motives and practices to aid and spur you on to the love of my king and yours in the most holy sacrament. The motives are very powerful, if well considered; and the practices very pious, though the style be low and grovelling, and the words chosen with little discernment. The reader will excuse a person, who knows no other science, style or language than that of Jesus Christ crucified; and who, amidst a multitude of affairs, which through the mercy of God belong to his master and his church, has scarce leisure to write *God alone, God alone, God alone.*

It suffices me to promote his glory alone, his interests alone, his love alone. It is this love I ask of you, to this love I exhort you, concerning this love I conjure you. Possessed of this love, though you have nothing, you have every thing, and con-

sequently are very rich. Deprived of it though enjoying every thing else, you in reality have nothing, and consequently are very poor. All consists in loving God; and all is vanity which is destitute of this love. St. John Chrysostom and Origen, instead of the common reading of those words of Job, *he was a simple and upright man* read; *he was a true man;* because, says the learned Origen, he who loves not God, is not a true man; because he is no longer reasonable, every thing convincing us that we only exist to honor and love the divinity.

The history of Normandy relates something very remarkable concerning this subject. In that province men formerly were so sensible of the shame of not loving God, that one could not offer them a greater affront than to say, *You do not love God:* insomuch that Prince Richard, the then duke, was under the necessity of enacting a law to oblige every person using that expression to make reparation for the insult. We may well sigh, seeing what passes in our days. The face of things is strangely changed, and very little resemblance can be traced between our times and theirs.

Nevertheless, the God whom we adore is not changeable, but always remains the same; and consequently is always worthy of the same love and respect. Let us go, therefore, o faithful souls, with one accord, to present him with our vows and adorations, to give him irrevocably our wills, to consecrate our hearts, and to dedicate our love to him. Let us love God, and endeavour to extend his love through the world. Bring to him, says St. Augustine, every heart you can, and say to them: *behold the object of your love, behold the object of your affections.* O sweet expression! pastors, repeat it to the souls entrusted to you;

fathers and mothers, repeat it to your children; lords, repeat it to your subjects; masters, repeat it to your servants.

Let us all say to one another: *Let us love God, let us love God.* Tell them these things, says the holy Father above mentioned, that they may weep and sigh in this vale of tears, and by these means efface the crimes they have committed against the divine love, and resolve to be eternally his. If you adhere to God by love, you will be immoveable; if you repose in him you will find peace. Why will you torment yourselves by wandering among creatures? If you seek true happiness, he alone can bestow it, you will never find it else where: you may seek it indeed, but will never obtain it. But if you truly love, you will find it: for every thing is given to love. Only love, and all is gained.

A holy hermit, giving an account of his spiritual exercises to the Abbot Joseph, asked him what he must do to walk securely in the ways of perfection. The holy man rising up extended his hands towards heaven, when his fingers by a miracle, appeared like ten torches all on fire. See here, said the saint, how you must walk in God with truth, you must be a man of fire, totally consumed in the flames of pure love. Behold, faithful souls, what I have to say to you. Give yourselves up entirely to the love of *God alone.*



GOD ALONE.

THE LOVE OF JESUS IN THE ADORABLE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

PART 1st.

Containing eighteen Motives for loving Jesus in the adorable Sacrament.

I. MOTIVE.

Jesus is present in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

INDEED *the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*, Gen. xxviii. These are the words of the patriarch Jacob; they do not mean that this holy man was ignorant of a truth known even to gentiles, that God by his immensity fills all things: but by these words, *The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*, he confesses that he did not reflect on it as it deserved, according to the interpretation of the holy bishop of Geneva.

Christian soul, I cannot suppose you to be ignorant, that this God of all greatness is hidden under the species of bread and wine; you cannot but know that, by a miracle of his tender love for us, he resides in our sacred vessels, and that by an excess of his unspeakable mercy, he dwells in our tabernacles. He who is essentially truth

has said it, and has said it, not by the ministry of another, but by his own most sacred mouth; yet, after all, we believe it in such a manner, that it may be said of us, that *we know it not.* This is one of the dreadful effects of sin, which shuts the eyes of the soul against the most shining lights of our holy religion, and casts the sinner into a lethargy, never sufficiently to be deplored, rendering him insensible to the most powerful charms of divine love. For must we not be strangely supine indeed, who are so little moved with the real presence of the eternal infinite God in the holy eucharist. Truly, this surpasses our conception.

God of love! with what astonishment must the soul be seized, which abandoning herself to the guidance of a divine light, discovers by the rays of grace, so moving a truth! How is she amazed! whilst in this light she perceives that this mystery surpasses all thought, she loses herself in an abyss of admiration, her life is altogether a life of astonishment! Contemplating the hard and frozen hearts of men, she wishes to sound in the ears of all: *o your blindness!* If she be asked her thoughts on so adorable a truth, she has no other answer than these words, *wonder, wonder, wonder:* for she knows that, if a creature should speak with the tongues of men and angels, it could never rehearse that goodness which the God of mercies manifests, by choosing his abode amongst us in the adorable sacrament. This it is which from time to time makes her breast heave with sighs at the blindness of men. This it is which renders her inconsolable at the thought, that the God of love should be so little loved. This it is which renders solitude so pleasing to her, where she may without interruption weep over this extremity of evils. This it is which gives her an infinite aversion for the

world, which knows not God according to the testimony of God himself, and which so many ways exposes the unhappy darkness in which it is involved with respect to its Creator, its Saviour, and its all. My Lord, *send forth lightening*, Ps. cxliii. 6. you who are the divine source of all light, send down some sparks of that inaccessible light in which you dwell upon the sons of men, to open their eyes and rouse them from the deplorable sleep in which they are overwhelmed.

It is for this reason, christian soul, that the last of creatures writes these lines, calling out to you with the apostle: *It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed.* Rom. xiii. 11. It is time, it is time to rouse from our sleep: our divine Saviour is much nearer than we imagine. Here he is, hidden under the species of bread and wine, observing from thence, as from the sacred lattice mentioned in the canticles, what our souls will do for him. He has said it, this ardent lover of men, that he who serves him ought to follow him, and that where he is his servants ought to be: but, behold, he is upon our altars; he is in our tabernacles; it is at his feet that we must choose our retreat; it is thither, but with fervor, that we must repair to make him a tender of our protestations, our adorations and the sacrifice of our hearts, sighing and bewailing, rending our hearts with contrition, proceeding from love for the little care we have hitherto taken to come and render the tribute of our respect to our only *All.* We should not hereafter so easily swerve from our fidelity to him, did our eyes once for all open themselves to his divine light; but shaking off that heaviness with which we are oppressed, we should say with Jacob, *Truly the Lord is in this place,*

and we knew it not: for, alas! have we ever reflected upon it.

II. MOTIVE.

Jesus is in the adorable Sacrament with all his Greatness.

REVERENCE *my sanctuary*, Lev. xxvi. 2. The majesty of kings and sovereign princes of the earth, the splendor and pomp of courts, draw together the people, and multiply the number of their attendants. At this reflection, I exclaim, o children of men, how long will you be heavy of heart? how long will you be attracted by the cheating illusions of the age? running after the world, which, from its inconstancy, will never permit you firmly to possess it, which will so soon escape from your hands, remaining at the same time little solicitous about *Him*, who alone can constitute all your happiness. Behold, here the king of kings, before whom a thousand worlds are as a single point, in whose presence the majesty of earthly kings vanishes as a shadow, and is indeed a mere nothing, before whom the pillars of heaven tremble, yet he is left alone in our churches: alas! scarce one is found to keep him company!

If grandeur please and attract you, be assured that the body of my adorable Master, who is present in the sacrament of the altar, possesses greater splendor alone than all the bodies of the blessed shall possess in the regions of glory; though they shall all shine with the brightness of the sun. It must then be said that the beauties of this divine body, more splendid far than all these lights together, adorn it with infinite grandeur and unspeakable excellence.

Know ye again that the holy soul of this

precious body is there present, that beautiful soul, the wonder of paradise, the love, the delight, the consolation of all the happy inhabitants of the heavenly regions; know ye that the *word*, the living image of the Father of lights is there, the God of all greatness, and before whom all other greatness is little indeed, or to speak more properly, is nothing at all. Come then and there adore the infinite majesty of the Lord of all things, and call to mind the words which he spoke in the xxvi. chap. of Levit. *Reverence my sanctuary.* O how ought men to annihilate themselves with a holy fear when they enter the place where he inhabits with all his greatness.

III. MOTIVE.

Jesus is present in the adorable Sacrament for ever.

BEHOLD, *I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world*, Mat. xxviii. 20. Behold, here I am with you all days, even to the consummation of ages, is the assurance given us by our divine Saviour. O inestimable favor! o incomparable happiness!' o excessive bounty! o unheard of mercy! That God in his goodness, should think on man is a subject of astonishment to the saints. *Lord what is man that thou shouldst be mindful of him?* But what will become of that man, when he shall know that this God of all greatness does not only vouchsafe in the multitude of his mercies to think of him; but moreover, that he has resolved to take up his abode with his creatures till the end of time?

But how shall it be possible not to lose ourselves in an abyss of admiration, if we consider that the Creator of the world having appeared on our earth was not known by the world! Conceive it who can! His creatures refused to receive their

Creator, who, in the bowels of his mercy, had descended from heaven to visit them! Nor is this all, they crucified him, putting him to an ignominious death, after inflicting every possible torment upon him, rending his virginal body with repeated cruelties, and covering his body with so many and so deep wounds; yet after so disgraceful a treatment, he not only visits them again, but conceives the design of remaining with them to the consummation of ages.

If the seraphim be not enraptured at such a spectacle, I know of nothing capable of working such an effect. But what shall men say? What shall they do after such an excess of love? Alas! the greater part will reflect little upon it, will be little affected by it: a striking proof indeed, that our hearts are harder than rocks, more unfeeling than the very stones! Attend to the words and actions of a heart affected in a lively manner with this wonderful bounty; I speak of the divine Teresa, that great lover of the son of God. Transported beyond herself at so admirable a love, she spoke of it to the heavens, she spoke of it to the earth, she addressed herself to men, she addressed herself to angels, she addressed herself to God, lamenting in a moving manner, that the God of love should be so little loved. In the midst of these divine transports she besought the eternal father to take pity on his beloved son. Ah! sovereign greatness did she say, if you oppose not yourself to it, this divine Saviour so penetrated with love for man, after having been so cruelly treated, will again expose himself to new torments, to new humiliations. She called upon her community to unite together in prayer, that this amiable Jesus might no more be so shamefully treated, and so hardly dealt with by men.

Well then, I address myself to you, to you

who read these lines; what says your heart? what thinks your mind of this excessive love of God? What are your resolutions, or rather what resolutions ought you not to take? I know indeed what you ought to do; but I ask of your heart what it will do.

For more than 1700 years has this God of love been upon our altars for the love of you: alas, how much time have you passed in his divine presence for the love of him? Stop here, and bewail your past conduct: let your heart melt with the most feeling sorrow, proceeding from the love of God.

What is yet more; this same God through his infinite love will remain with men to the consummation of ages; search your hearts. Are they disposed to keep him company? What number of hours will you consecrate to him to testify your love, to pay your tribute of adoration to him.

IV. MOTIVE.

Jesus is continually present in the adorable Sacrament.

BEHOLD *the tabernacle of God with men*, Ps. 21. O immensity of the love of that God whom we adore! He was not content with having visited men during the days of his visible conversation with them, nor to appear from time to time upon our altars in the most august of all our mysteries.

This would have accomplished the promise he made of being with us till the end of time; but his love will not permit him to absent himself from us though but for a moment. He is in our churches by day, and by night, at all times, at all hours and moments. *Give praise to the Lord for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.* O chris-

tian souls, acknowledge that the mercies of the God of our hearts are admirable; sing to him eternal canticles for his astonishing bounty. Let all those who fear the Lord assemble, and let us cry out with one voice, *O how good is the God of Israel!* how amiable are his mercies! Behold the eternal Father has sanctified his house, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always, 3 Kings. ix. 3. He has there fixed his eyes and his heart not in a passing way, but always without any exception of time.

O my God, permit a poor abject soul to interrogate you; whence comes it that you remain in our tabernacles, not only during the day, but moreover that you pass the night along with us. I can conceive that during the day you may have certain adorers, certain persons who will keep you company: but when I reflect that you are all alone in our churches during whole nights, I am thunderstruck, my mind is seized with astonishment. At the approach of evening, I contemplate our temples, which because men retire from them; are shut, and I perceive that love still detains you there: at least, o my Saviour, why quit you not these residences, which you have so divinely established with men, since there are no longer men with whom you may remain? It is love that has reduced you to this state of being our prisoner.

O children of men! the excessive love which the great God of eternity has had for you, has made him your prisoner and your slave. O heavens! be astonished exceedingly, your sovereign is detained, is shut up under the key of a small tabernacle: love keeps him bound under a fragil species. Truly the sight of a love so astonishing, so excessive, is a most pressing motive to engage us

to betake ourselves to our churches, there to pass all the time we are able; never to quit them, but with regret; to leave our hearts and all our affections at the foot of our altars, when necessity obliges us to separate ourselves from them; to tend without ceasing to the place where our only true delight reposes; to reflect during the day in the midst of our affairs, in the midst of companies and occupations with creatures, on that amiable Jesus, who resides continually in the divine eucharist, who excites us by this testimony of love to send forth our sighs when awaking in the night regretting with hearts full of love, the impossibility we experience of being ever in body and mind in that place, where Jesus is present in body, in soul and divinity. Oh! how ought we to call out with the psalmist on this subject: *This is my rest for ever and ever: here I will dwell for the Lord has chosen it.* O my soul, may each one follow his own bent; but let this be our *place of delight*, our continual retreat.

V. MOTIVE.

Jesus is in the adorable Sacrament in every Part of the World.

NEITHER *is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them, as our God is present.* Deut. iv. No, there is no nation like the christian people, so happy in this facility, it has of approaching to its God. Heretofore under the old law, there was only one temple for the whole world, only one sanctuary, into which no one but the high priest alone could ever enter, and he out of respect for the sacredness of the place, filled it with the smoke of incense, lest his eyes should see any thing; but now the

God of infinite greatness does not only reside in a temple by the effects of his grace, but he is corporally in as many places as there are churches, as there are altars in the world.

Formerly it was not only forbidden to touch the ark, but likewise to look too nearly upon it; the Bethsamites were punished for having cast their eyes with too great curiosity upon it. At present we are not only allowed, but commanded, not simply to touch, but to eat himself, of whom the ark was only a figure. Well may we say that there is no faith amongst us, that having eyes we see not, that having ears we understand not.

Pilgrimages are made into foreign countries to honor God there in the relics of his saints: it is a pious practice, but scarcely does any one go a hundred paces to pay his respects to the adorable body of this God of majesty.

May we not say, that the excess of the love of God, constitutes the excess of our coldness and insensibility, from the bad use we make of it. Is it possible, if God had not loved us so much, that we should not have loved him more? Let us learn these terrible truths from what we see. Had the amiable Jesus only established the presence of his divine body in one place in the world, would not all people have experienced a desire to run thither from every part to adore, to make him an offering of their vows in this adorable sanctuary? When arrived thither, would not their hearts have been annihilated at the presence of our dreadful mysteries? would they not be seized with a divine fear at the consideration of their greatness? would not all then be respect, astonishment and love? But since God in his infinite goodness has established the presence of his body, not only in one place, not only in each province, in each city, but in as many places as there are churches, in

the poorest villages; this it is which renders people so unconcerned about him, which makes them reject his love. Behold him at our doors, he there awaites us day and night; and, by an act of contempt, which can never be sufficiently conceived, this divine lover of men is abandoned by all his creatures.

Alas! what bounty! what love! he is in our churches, in the country places, and he is there though alone through the week, that the poor on Sundays and holydays, may not be obliged to seek him at a distance. O foolish and insensible that we are! shall our hearts be ever insensible to the charms of divine love?

We envy the happiness of the Magi, who came to adore the divine Saviour of our souls; but what pains and difficulties did they experience in their way? We are not in possession of kingdoms like them which we must quit; we have not such long journeys to take: yet for all this do we make any efforts to pay our respects to our great master in the adorable sacrament?

In the course of his mission access to him was difficult by reason of the crowds which surrounded him on all sides, yet these poor people who knew him not as we know him, were so full of zeal that they uncovered the roofs of the houses to let down their sick and place them in the presence of him, who in his mercy is come to cure us of all our evils: the doors of our temples are open, and the ways of Sion mourn because they are deserts, and few are seen to pass along them.

In a word, shall it be said, that the blessed virgin, that amiable queen of angels, had not always access to her divine son, as the gospel relates, whilst we vile worms of the earth have all possible liberty to approach, to speak to him, to remain in

his divine presence: yet after all we refuse to make a holy use of this precious favor.

VI. MOTIVE.

Jesus is in the adorable Sacrament for all Sorts of People.

COME to me all you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, Mat. 11. Come to me, says this amiable Jesus, all you who are under trouble, who are weighed down with heavy burdens, and I will relieve you. These words full of love, which love itself dictated, are addressed to persons of every description.

He is in the adorable Sacrament for the poor as well as for the rich; he there gives himself to the learned and the unlearned, to the great and to the little, to the monarchs, and their subjects, to those who pass their lives in obscurity, as well as to those who are raised to the dignity of the throne. The bread of angels, says the church in her canticles, is become the bread of men. O wonder! o miracle! the Lord of all things is given for the nourishment of the poor, of the slave, of the most abject amongst men. Jesus, the sovereign of the universe is not surrounded with guards, who drive away from his presence those who wish to approach him; all the avenues of the palace of this great king of heaven are open: it costs nothing, money is not necessary to purchase the honor of speaking to him. Unspeakable consolation for christian souls, who having it in their power to enjoy the presence of him, who constitutes the happiness of the saints, begin now, in some sort, to partake of the joys of a blissful eternity. They find a paradise out of paradise: the earth is changed into a heaven of

delights, and men have no great reason to envy the happiness of the angels, since they possess him, who is the fulness of their happiness.

Would to God that all the poor, all the afflicted, all those who are persecuted, who are abandoned, who live in the midst of contempt, who have suffered great losses, would understand well these truths, remembering the words of the apostle, *how hath he not also, with him given us all things?* That the eternal Father having given his well beloved Son, has in him given us all things.

Jesus is for us in the adorable sacrament, he is for all who wish to receive him there; but Jesus is God, he is consequently the great and only *all*. Can any thing then be wanting to him who is in possession of this infinite good? O souls which are in affliction, console yourselves: he who administers perfect content to the heart, who fully satisfies their desires, is yours. Rejoice, ye poor; you are very rich; for you can enjoy an immense good; and whilst the great ones of this world, the rich of the earth reject you and drive you from their houses, their companies, and hear you not, the great king of angels gives you such an audience as you could wish; he is pleased with your conversation, when it proceeds from a good heart; he fills you with his graces, he caresses you with his most precious favors; in a word, he ranks and numbers you with his greatest favorites. *He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.* He hath filled those who are in necessity with his gifts, according to the canticle of the amiable queen of heaven, leaving the worldly rich, full of the things here below, but quite bereft of his favors,

VII. MOTIVE.

Jesus is all humility in the adorable Sacrament.

L*EARN of me because I am meek and humble of heart*, Mat. xi. O my soul! it is here that thou must cry out with the prophet, that the works of thy God, his designs, his thoughts are impenetrable to the human heart. We cannot seriously and with attention consider it without being overwhelmed with love; for indeed having seen the God of paradise invested with infinite greatness, through his infinite love for us establishing his dwelling amongst us to the consummation of ages, does it not seem that this is all that the creature could expect from the most excessive love that he bears it.

But when we reflect, when we know that this Being, infinitely adorable, hiding all his greatness, suffers extreme humiliations in the divine eucharist, can we then say or think any thing more on this subject, which will afford astonishment to the saints, for all eternity?

Jesus Christ, says the apostle, *has humbled himself becoming man.* This man of God could not make use of terms more strong to express the humility of this son of the eternal Father, where then shall we find words to express in some sort the inconceivable abasement of this same God of Majesty in the adorable sacrament? *Behold I have made thee small amongst the nations; thou art exceedingly contemptible*, says the scripture.

It must be confessed that the eternal become an infant, greatly humbles himself; but when in the manger, the harmonious voice of angels is heard; whilst in the divine eucharist all is silence. To be obliged to flee into Egypt like an exile, is a subject of confusion to him; but at his arrival there, every

idol is overthrown. He is despised by the Pharisees during the course of his mortal pilgrimage; but he raises the dead to life six or seven thousand persons follow him, he is sought in order to be made king, houses are uncovered to procure access to him.

If he be rendered abject by his death on mount Calvary, he becomes illustrious by the miracles which he there performs: the rocks are split, the sun is eclipsed, the monuments are opened; but in the eucharist this humiliation is carried to the greatest excess, the senses there distinguish nothing. Here, my God, the God of glory is clothed in the humble species of bread and wine. Had he, at least, appeared an infant, as in the manger, or a man, as on mount Calvary: but no, nothing is perceived but the appearances of bread. O my soul, my soul, let us ever bear in remembrance that there is the school of pure love, the divine school where we ought to learn to walk in the holy ways of christianity, to which we have been called and introduced by so special a grace.

Attend then at thy leisure to the lesson which thy good master holds out to thee: but, once for all, thou must learn it well, in order to practise it the rest of thy days. *Learn of me*, says this bountiful Saviour, *for I am humble of heart*: and, in effect, dost thou not behold how the word eternal, equal in all things to his Father, debases himself before him on our altars, humbles himself even before men, abandoning himself to their powers; below the brute creation, which can abuse the holy species; below insensible beings the fire being able to burn them, below the very devils, since the magicians can carry off the sacred hosts into their infernal assemblies. After these things, if humility have heretofore appeared to us difficult, should not vanity be now counted among im-

possibilities? O dust and ashes! what sayst thou to such pressing truths? How useful would it be to place before our eyes all those things which cause the greatest trouble to our pride; could a heart be found which would refuse to suffer any abjection after witnessing these surprising humiliations of its God?

Listen o heavens; be attentive, o earth; the great *All* humbles himself below nothing: where then shall nothing place itself? Hearken, o men; it frequently happens that particles of the holy host imperceptibly fall, particularly when the communicants are numerous, and thus the God of paradise is laid in the dust and trodden under our feet. Strange spectacle in the eyes of the holy angels, who, beholding their sovereign in this state of annihilation, at the same time see nothing but insolent vanity in the greatest part of those who are in our churches, pride reigning in their hearts, in their intentions, in their posture, and in their dress; such extremity of pride, that it frequently urges the disciples of a God, humbled in this manner, to dispute in his presence for precedence in place, in dignity, in the vain honors of a deluding and miserably deluded world. This it is which surpasses our conception; but, alas! this is what is done every day.

We will then venture to say, that rarely shall we find a truly christian soul: it is in the manner rehearsed, that the God of christians is humbled, and we only hear and see such as calling themselves christians, speak and live like infidels. This is the language of these miserable and pretended christians: why should I give up to such a person? Why would you that I should humble myself beneath my inferiors? O words, o thoughts and behaviour, which deserve to be the execration

of all the faithful ! O my soul, the resolution is taken, thou must give place to every creature, thou must humble thyself beneath all mankind, without any distinction of rank or fortune.

We ought always to consider ourselves inferior to every creature, look upon ourselves as the outcast of the world; after the humiliations of our master in the adorable sacrament, it ought to be our honor to bear up with every possible abjection.

It is in humiliation we ought to seek honor; contempt should be the subject of our glory. There have been men of holy lives, and we ourselves have seen such, who have ranked themselves beneath the brute creation, having no other shelter but the huts, where straw was laid for the beasts to repose upon, and no other bed; yet at their approach they withdrew themselves, yielding up their place to them ! Others have denied themselves the morsel which they had in their mouths, to give it to such creatures: nor am I surprised at it: a soul that is the least acquainted with the humility of Jesus in the adorable sacrament, is capable of every humiliation. My God and my Saviour, alas ! how shall those act otherwise who know you. The world understands not these practices; but neither is the world acquainted with my God. O world, world, o miserable world, it is my wish for ever to detest thee.

VIII. MOTIVE.

Jesus is poor in the adorable Sacrament.

I *AM poor*, Ps. lxxxvii. O my soul, this voice which thou hearest, he who speaks to thee is the Holy Ghost. And this it is, which ought to remove from our minds every doubt, and ought fully to convince us of an inconceivable though

certain truth; a truth which the divine spirit has taught us by the mouth of the Royal Prophet, who, speaking in the person of our amiable Saviour, assures us that he is poor: *I am poor.* Let us admire this striking truth in the divine eucharist; where he, who is the Lord of all things, is poor indeed, often not possessed of a piece of plate, in which he may honorably repose. You know, o eternal greatness you know, o sublime king of paradise, how often we have found you in vessels of tin dirty and most despicable; in linen soiled and tattered; sometimes in the midst of worms and spiders in tabernacles full of dust, such as would not be made use of even in a kitchen.

We have seen with astonishment vessels so shameful covered with a little linen or cloth; pitiful rags all rent and torn; chalices from which the precious blood of a God is received: so mean and hideous as to turn ones heart. A person of but the least respectability would blush to serve at his table such a vessel, and all this time it is said that there is no means of relieving the adorable Jesus in the extreme poverty to which he is reduced by his own free will, and from a love which knows no bounds: whilst the great ones of this world have their magnificent services, their splendid plate and precious furniture.

But what is more; the greatest part of the poor in our country places have neat and proper linen to use on particular occasions; it is only you, o my Saviour and my God, who are reduced to the extremity of poverty. Ah! my soul, how does such a thought affect thee? Were we not so hardened, we should shed tears of blood, we should lament without ceasing in the bitterest strains, the treatment which creatures shew to their Creator.

Is it possible that our eyes should see those things which they are constrained to see so frequently in the visits which every year, the dignity to which the God of infinite goodness has called his unworthy creature, obliges us to make? I avow, I declare in the face of heaven and earth, that my heart must be hardness itself, not to have yet been consumed with love at the sight of such precious testimonies of the love of its God. A good heart, a feeling heart, which knew how to love its amiable master, could subsist no longer: long ere this it would have cost it its life, it would have died and fallen a victim of love and regret to see its God, so lovely and so loving, and yet, alas! to be so little loved.

Verily, verily, how aweful is this mystery of love! and what account shall we have to give of it at the day of judgment! O rich, o poor, I have but one word to say to you. Rich, *weep, howling in the midst of your wealth*, to use the words of holy writ, be ye overwhelmed with infinite confusion at the sight of a God so poor: poor, be ye consoled, be ye filled with a holy joy at the resemblance you bear your Saviour; let all christians with one voice say; that poverty must indeed be amiable, since it was so tenderly loved by the God of love.

IX. MOTIVE.

Jesus is most obedient in the adorable Sacrament.

I *DO not resist*, Is. i. Though man should prove rebellious to his God, though the creature should withdraw itself from its dependance on its Creator, and become disobedient to his commandments, Jesus for the love which he bears it, will be obedient in every thing, abandoning himself without reserve to the power of men. So

soon as some amongst them shall have pronounced four words, behold he descends from the bosom of his Father, but without quitting him, to place himself in the hands of the priest, and that whenever he pleases, conforming himself to his will both as to time and place: for it is not my God who marks the hour to the priest, but receives it from him, and with so much exactitude that in the course of seventeen hundred years, he has not once failed to obey.

The scripture informs us that he was obedient to the blessed Virgin, and her virginal spouse Saint Joseph; it is this which enraptures all holy souls, it is this which makes them faint with love; but, behold, here still greater wonders in the adorable sacrament, he obeys as many creatures as there are priests in the world, as there have been since the law of grace, or as there shall be till the end of ages; and when by consecration he is present under the sacramental species, he there faithfully remains without ever being fatigued, he permits himself to be carried at pleasure from altar to altar, to the habitations of the sick, through the streets in procession. *I do not resist.* Such is his obedience that he never resists the will of man, he entirely abandons himself in the hands of a miserable creature. *God obedient to the voice of man*, as it is said in the old law. God then obeys man through love, and shall not love make man obedient to God?

Here, at leisure, must we meditate on the subjects which withdraw us from the observance of the order of God, and conclude on great but efficacious resolutions of following the rules which the divine bounty has prescribed us; but let us consider what we have just been saying, that our resolutions may be the stronger. For, if these truths be seriously weighed, we should no longer find any difficulty

in obeying not only God, but every creature without reserve for his love.

X. MOTIVE.

Jesus renounces every Thing in the adorable Sacrament.

I *AM a worm and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people*, Ps. xxi. Since Jesus is in the adorable Sacrament, he is there in his divine nature, and as a consequence of this, he is there vested with all possible greatness, but his glory, infinite as it is, is there entirely hidden, insomuch that it seems, if we are to believe appearances, that there is nothing there but a pitiful morsel of bread. *Truly thou art a hidden God*, Is. xlv. 15. Truly it is here, if ever, that we must say, that the God whom we adore is a hidden God, since he abandons all the marks of his divinity.

He is all powerful, and under these species, he appears weakness itself; it is he who gives motion to all things, and he is there immoveable. He is the uncreated and eternal word, and he is silent. Though they be guilty of insolencies in his divine presence; men by their discourses, by their postures and looks; ladies by the shameful nakedness of their necks, it seems as if he perceived nothing of it. You might say, (for o my God, to what has not love reduced you!) that he is like to the idols of which, the psalmist says, that *they have eyes, and see not, ears, and hear not, hands, and feel not*, Ps. cxiii.

No signs of life are discoverable, it is not even possible to distinguish a consecrated host from one which is not. If in the manger, his love kept him bound by the linen in which he was wrapt, he has the liberty to sigh. On the cross he speaks, he moves

his eyes; but in the divine eucharist, he does nothing of all this: should he there appear in the figure of an angel or of any noble creature, he would attract the respect of men; but he is there united, not to an intelligent creature, not to a substance, but to the accidents of a crumb of bread, of a drop of wine. He will place himself under a small particle of the Host, which scarcely can serve for an object to arrest the looks of the creature: behold him thus despoiled in appearance of all the greatness of his divinity: the human person itself is not there, the holy humanity only subsisting in the divine person. It is thus that love makes him quit every thing: the great *all* leaves every thing for the sake of man, who is nothing. After all shall this miserable nothing have the courage to reserve any thing for himself?

The earth possesses no true greatness; but were it filled with it, we ought with justice to despise all for the adorable Jesus. Oh! how difficult it is to find one upright heart, that truly loves this divine lover of men! For if it be the property of true love to abandon all for the thing loved, we must be forced to say, that few persons love, since there are few who have learned to quit the creature for the love of the Creator.

Some are attached to gold and silver, others to the pleasures of the senses. This person is ensnared by the esteem of the world, by what others may say of him, by the false honors of the world, and that by the friendship of some paltry creature. You will find some who cannot disengage themselves from that attachment to their bodies, men who cannot be contented without good cheer, delicate meats, delicious wines; women, who spend a considerable part of their time in dressing themselves, speaking of their dress, &c. O God! what entertainment for persons who hope for

eternity, and who cannot resolve to hide the infamous and shameful nakedness of their miserable flesh.

There are others who are taken in more specious snares: persons who pride themselves upon their genius, who ever aim at sublime and lofty ideas, at eloquent discourses, at polite phrases, who make a parade of their science, who endeavour to render themselves great in the eyes of the world by their learning: and, after all, many who have quitted the attachment they had to all these things, find themselves entangled in bands less tight indeed, but which continue to keep them captive, if not speedily broken asunder. Such are they who have an attachment for spiritual joys, lights, and consolations, for the sensible and tender feelings of devotion, their particular practices and exercises of piety, to which they are enslaved, and for some other certain means which although good and excellent in themselves, ought not to captivate the soul, such as directors, spiritual friends, the perusal of certain books, different articles appertaining to devotion, certain places, although holy in themselves, as it is God alone they should aim at without reserve, and not dwell on the ways which conduct to him.

You who read these truths, consider what it is that holds, what it is that stops you, and reflect that love having made the God of love quit all for you, there is nothing which you ought not to disengage yourself from; a father or mother, a child, a friend, honor, friendship; I say yet more, you yourselves cannot serve as excuses in the presence of the adorable sacrament, for not abandoning and quitting every attachment. Examine then what are your resolutions, see what God does for you, reflect on what you have done, and what you would wish to do for him; but reflect on

what you are, and what God is; reflect on what you would wish to have quitted for his love at the day of judgment; it is that you ought to quit at this moment. Do you do this? are you desirous of doing it? These creatures, these goods, these honors, yourself, these objects, to which you are so attached, what will become of them all at the moment of your death? What will become of this world to which you so eagerly adhere? These worldly conversations, the beauty of the body, the elegance of the mind, the friendship of creatures? Alas! all these vanities will be odious to you! They will finally pass with the world, to which we must bid an eternal farewel.

Ah! how much more sweet would it be to us should the love of God detach us from these things, rather than the inevitable necessity of death. I say once more to you; think well on this, diligently examine all the foldings and recesses of your heart, to banish from it every thing which is not God, every thing which tends not to his pure love, every thing which bespeaks the love of the creature. I know not what you will do, but I know what you ought to do: I know again, that if you practise it not, all is lost for you, and you lose yourselves; but here let me cry out to you with all possible earnestness: is it possible that my well beloved should find so little love in the hearts of his creatures.

Ah! my sovereign, your love seems to me so strong, that I am convinced, nor can I doubt that a soul which loves you, would esteem as nothing, all the goods, all the honors, and all the pleasures of the world together, even the monarchy of the whole universe; it would tread under foot crowns and sceptres. Blessed God, she would burn a thousand worlds, sacrificing them to the greatness of your love.

She has no other attachment which captivates her, nothing that witholds her, no schemes, no desires however holy they may be; I now possess her heart, she repines not at quitting the creature; if she sigh or lament, it is because she has but herself to give a sacrifice of love: she would wish to posses every thing, that she might give every thing, and that which causes her to shed tears is, that, did she possess the whole creation, it would be little for her well-beloved. Alas! it would be nothing for him, who gives us the great *all.* Examine yourselves after the model of such souls, who love in this manner, and behold your own state. Do you truly love God?

XI. MOTIVE.

Jesus does all in the adorable Sacrament.

GOD *worketh all,* 1 Cor. xii. St. Paul instructed in paradise, the great apostle speaking to us concerning his beloved master, says, that it is he who works in us all the good which is there done, that it is by his mercy that we are what we are. For this end he has established sacraments in his church, which are the sacred channels of grace; but in the sacrament of the eucharist, there is not only grace, but the author of all gifts, who, by an incomparable charity, being desirous of assisting us in all our wants, *worketh* all things for us.

He is our divine and powerful king, to defend us from our formidable foes, who with so much rage, force and stratagem, cease not to attack us in order to compass our eternal ruin. *Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me,* Ps. xxii. 5.

It is there that the soul ought to have recourse, to be supported under its weakness, to find strength

in its debility, that it may not fall in its conflict. If the Lord be with it there is no room for fear, though it should walk amongst the shades of death, its ways would be in peace, protected by the right hand of its Master and its God.

Jesus in the divine eucharist performs the office of a good father, watching over all our necessities, with a care which we may adore, but cannot express. *The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing.* Ps. xxii. Nothing can be wanting to a soul which entirely abandons herself to divine providence: if we do not sufficiently experience his assistance, the reason is because we rely too much upon the creature.

Happy, a thousand times happy the soul, which has placed its whole confidence in the Lord of all things; she will not only experience in him the love of a good father, but will find all the tenderness of a maternal heart. Yes, says this Lord of infinite love, though a mother should be so unnatural as to forget her child, I will never forget my people. This he has fully verified by giving us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink. What may we not expect from the goodness of a merciful God, after such an excess of love? Why should we disquiet or afflict ourselves about salvation or temporal goods? If we permit ourselves to run after its charms, paradise is ours, every thing even in this life will redound to our good, though frequently we know it not; since we number those things which are the most conducive to eternal salvation, as tribulation of mind, poverty, contempt, to be abandoned by creatures, as the greatest misfortunes and evils that can befal us.

Jesus in the divine eucharist performs the office of judge, to listen to our suit; but what ought to be the greatest consolation is, that whilst he exercises the office of judge, he undertakes that of

advocate likewise. At his feet then we should frequently expose the difficulties of the great affair in which we are engaged, the affair of eternity, and which indeed is our only affair. O insensibility of christian souls! For a trivial lawsuit there is nothing they omit: they consult the ablest lawyers, they make interest with the judges, they employ the credit of their friends; and for the affair of eternity scarcely is an effort made. If they confer about it with the adorable Jesus, it is in so cold a manner as plainly to evince how little it concerns them, all this proceeds from a want of faith; for rarely is the person to be found who has faith.

Jesus in the divine eucharist acts the part of a physician, and the divine nourishment which he there gives is a certain remedy for all our maladies: it delivers us from all weakness, cures our sickness, preserves us from all the infirmities into which we might fall.

In a word, Jesus in this divine sacrament is a sacred lover, to whom we may communicate our griefs, our affairs, all our wants; and this when we please, and as long as we please: how consoling it is in the midst of interior trials to imitate the conduct of the humble St. Francis, without stopping to lay his troubles before creatures, he used to throw himself at the feet of his Saviour, and there he unburthened his humble heart and retired full of comfort and content. The cause of our unhappiness under our troubles and affairs, arises from our seeking consolation amongst men where it is not to be found. *God alone. God alone. God alone.*

Behold here then what God does for your salvation, he omits nothing, he descends to every state, he exercises every office, a conduct which ought to make you acknowledge that with truth,

it is said that salvation is a thing of greater consequence than we imagine.

XII. MOTIVE.

Jesus suffers in the adorable Sacrament.

CHARITY *beareth all things*, 1 Cor. xiii. Arise, my soul, let us plunge ourselves deeper and deeper in the fathomless abyss of the love of our God. Amiable seraphim, be ye our auspicious guides by the light of those sacred flames, which so holily consume you. Most loving spirits, support us in the ways of love, by the ardor of the divine flames which deliciously inflame you. Open our eyes, that we may contemplate this astonishing spectacle, at which worldlings are so little astonished. Purify our hearts, to render them susceptible of the most lively impressions of the love, which there so miraculously blazes forth: animate our courage, hereafter ever to form none but the most noble sentiments, and to conceive the most generous resolutions that love can inspire: for, behold here, Jesus, the great king, before whom the whole universe is not a point, has so far abandoned himself in the holy sacrament to his love for man, that, not content with there quitting every thing, and working in every part a prodigy never to be equalled, he there suffers every thing, he there endures every thing; he, who is impassible, who dwells in the midst of infinite glory, who is the subject of the adoration and respect of the heavenly powers.

He there suffers infidels who blaspheme what they are ignorant of, and heretics who deny his presence. Strange injury to a heart, the most loving of all hearts! not only inasmuch as they acknowledge not his love, but as they deny it;

a thing of all others the most grievous to a person who knows how to love.

But, who shall be able to relate what he endures from the crimes and ingratitude of catholics, who acknowledge his presence in the divine eucharist. If we enter into our churches, they are either solitudes, abandoned places; or, if we there remark crowds of people, this only serves to discover to us more and more the extreme ingratitude of their hearts. How many insolencies are committed, how many irreverences, how many immodesties in the discourses which are there held, by the gestures and actions which are there practised, by postures ill becoming the sanctity of the place, by their execrable nakedness which they carry with them even to the foot of the sanctuary.

But, could we penetrate into the recesses of the soul, which are open to *Him*, to whom nothing lies hidden, what monstrous, what diabolical things should we not witness? How many, who, whilst they are corporally present in the church, suffer their minds to be carried on every side by voluntary destractions? How many mouths which impudently lie to the Lord, who offer their prayers to him, who say they wish to serve him, whilst their hearts heave with the love of the world, the sworn enemy of Jesus; whilst their imaginations are filled with filthy and wicked thoughts in presence of the king of virgins, and the ever constant friend of purity; are filled with sentiments of hatred and aversion in presence of *Him*, who is the God of love, and who requires that we love one another as he loves us; are filled with the notions of pride and vanity, whilst the God of all glory is reduced to a state infinitely humbling.

This is not all; the sufferings which love has

imposed upon our Sovereign, stop not there. O heart of mine, here thou must burst with grief and love, or thou must be hard indeed. Many by an outrage, which ought to cause the pillars of heaven to tremble, receive the body of the God of heaven and earth in the state of mortal sin, either because they are guilty of sins for which they have not had a true sorrow, or because their resolution of amendment for the future was not sufficiently strong: a resolution which ought to be such, as to be ready to part with all, the governor his charge, the tradesman his shop, the rich his wealth, the lady her beauty; in a word, all which we hold as most dear, rather than ever to commit any mortal sin, either of impurity, hatred, injustice, or rather than remain in the immediate occasion of sin.

O God, how rare are such resolutions in the world! It is not so easy to meet with them, as many who falsely deceive themselves may think: and all these lodge Jesus Christ with the devil. What a crime! what an outrage!

We read, and our age, alas! is witness to the most abominable outrages offered to Jesus in the adorable eucharist. This most adorable body, which, next to the vision of God, constitutes the happiness of the saints, has been thrown to the dogs, has been trodden under foot, the holy species have been cut in pieces, have been cast into sinks. These things cause us to fear, and with reason; but the sinner, who receives him in the state of mortal sin, in a heart, which is the dwelling place of the devil, and who thus lodges him with the devil; and which is dreadful in a place where the devil has dominion; what will he do at the sight of so terrible a truth? Alas! what are we doing? The Jews, who knew not the God of glory, crucified him; they did it without knowledge: for had they known him, says St. Augustin, they

would never have crucified him. Nevertheless, we weep over his passion, we exclaim against his judges, we are roused with indignation against his executioners: and we perceive not, say the holy fathers, that we commit the same crimes with this difference only, that their sin was committed in ignorance, but ours with full knowledge, with the most consummate impiety.

I call on you then, o christian soul, not to meditate alone on the passion of the son of God, which so many ages ago he endured in Judea, but on that which he at present suffers in every part of the world from bad catholics, and perhaps from you who are reading these things. Proceed not further, without examining yourself on so dreadful a subject. Are you not guilty of those infidelities, which we have just been remarking? Peruse them once more, examine yourselves with respect to all the disorders you may there find; to those irreverences, so common in our churches, to what passes in your own interior; as well as with respect to the bad communions, which are so frequently made.

Are you not at present, or have you never been of that unfortunate number? If you be, learn from St. John Chrysostom, and other fathers, that you are worse than Judas, than Pilate, than the Jews who crucified the Son of God. O horror of horrors! o crime, more hellish than human! But I ask you: have you yet given it a serious thought? Were you convinced that you were become another Judas; nay, a hundred times worse than Judas? But, what says now your heart to you? is sin abandoned? Does it bid an eternal adieu to the vanities, to the impurities, and to the enmities which reign in the world? What resolutions do you form? Is it not sufficient to have been accessary to the death of a God? Are you not satisfied with the pains you have caused him to

suffer? Would you wish to add pain to pain, grief to grief, cross to cross? Deceive not yourselves, this is the part you will act, if you put not your conscience in order.

But if you have already applied the remedy, reflect awhile on the past: consider how many times you have crucified the Son of God; for this is a truth taught us by the Holy Ghost: *crucifying again.* After this give vent to your tears, let them flow the rest of your days, like the waters of an inexhaustible source: sigh and mourn, cry out in the excess of your grief; speak of it to the angels, speak of it to men; bewail, for every moment, which remains of your life, your excessive crimes, and detest them with horror.

In a word, remember that Jesus suffers the last of indignities in the adorable sacrament, and do you reflect that it is for your sakes that he is reduced to such extremities! Ah! I ask of your heart, what return it will make for such a love, what it will suffer for him? Is there any injury, which, after this, it will refuse to endure, poverty or affliction, interior or exterior pains? Will it not be content to suffer from all sorts of persons, from enemies and friends, from kindred and those who are not allied, from superiors and inferiors, from those it has obliged, as well as from those who have received no favors?

Can any exception be made, after having considered a God overwhelmed with so many sufferings. Reflect again here on the thing which causes you the greatest trouble; on that affront, you have received; on that loss you have sustained; on that injustice, which has been done you; on that inclination, which gives you the greatest trouble; on that interior pain, by which you suffer the most. Your greatest afflictions you ought the most

willingly to endure, that by this means you may shew your love for him who suffered so much for the love of you.

With this view the saints became invariably desirous of crosses; and it is a truth, that the most pure souls have received the greatest share of sufferings from the son of God. The members, the most intimately united to their head by sympathizing the more with him, have borne the greatest share in his sufferings.

XIII. MOTIVE.

Jesus is the Example of perfect Mortification in the adorable Sacrament.

LOOK, *and make according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount.* Exod. 25. It is certain that mortification is not only useful but absolutely necessary, since by it we die to this world in order to live by a divine life, a glorious and incomparable state to which christians are so bountifully called: since by this virtue we not only destroy the causes of a particular sin, but all the disorders of corrupt nature; which ought all to cease and be annihilated before we can enjoy the eternal happiness which is prepared for us: for nothing impure, according to the declaration of holy writ, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. With reason therefore is it asserted, that mortification is of equal necessity as eternal life, that is to say, the necessity is absolute. No one can claim exceptions, all must walk on in the waysof mortification and self-denial: hence so small the number of the elect, of those who are saved! Such being the extreme blindness of the greater part of mankind, that we witness those who say and protest their earnestness in the affair of salvation, straying away in ways diametrically opposite. The reason is, that the road to heaven being very

narrow, we must necessarily mortify ourselves to enable us to enter; yet we think only of gratifying the senses, of imitating the ways of the world, of satisfying the pleasures of a corrupt nature.

Truly, if we seriously reflect that in losing our soul, all is lost, and that without mortification salvation is not attainable: it is impossible for us not to resolve to declare war against ourselves by abandoning our inclinations, by detaching our souls from the pursuit of the inferior appetite which domineers in us without reserve. But when we cast our eyes upon the model which the eternal Father has exhibited to us on mount Calvary, and which he daily exhibits in the adorable sacrament, the soul feels itself more than ever urged on to renounce itself: for if the incarnate Son of God is the model after which we ought to frame our lives, if the eternal Father will save only such as are conformable to it, the obligation by which we are bound to mortify ourselves is indispensible, the great, the adorable Jesus being the perfect model of it. We need only look and consider what passes in the divine eucharist, to be entirely convinced of this truth: for does it not appear that this divine Saviour has no other sentiment, no other thought than that of the priest to whom he unreservedly commits himself? He has no movement but such as is given him, he chooses not one place more than another, he deprives himself of the functions of the members of his body, he is as dead, being united to the accidents of a lifeless substance.

This is the original of which we ought to be the copies and the images. For this end we must be like to him, we must bear his lineaments and features. The christian who professes to belong to Jesus Christ, ought to walk in his ways, and follow his footsteps. Remark, holy writ says, not

only that it is good and useful to imitate him, but assures us that we are obliged to do it, that it is necessary to be done. I stop here to put the question to you, whether till now you have been acquainted with this. But if you know it, what is your practice? I leave you to reflect upon it yourselves.

XIV. MOTIVE.

Jesus commemorates his bitter Passion in the adorable Sacrament.

FOR *as often as you eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come.* Cor. 26. One of the ends of the institution of the divine eucharist, is to bring to our remembrance the pains and torments of his holy passion, of which he is desirous in his own person to renew the memory. The adorable sacrament of the altar is a lively representation of the death of this blessed Saviour; for this reason, it is instituted under two distinct species really separate, to signify the real separation of his body and his blood on mount Calvary. This it is which made St. Ambrose say that the church daily performs the obsequies of her Saviour. And truly it is too signal a favor for us not to renew the memory of it every day of our lives.

A God expiring for love upon a gibbet ought to be the great occupation of our minds, the beloved object of our affections. This amiable God crucified for us ought never to escape from our remembrance; and were not our ingratitude greater than the imagination can conceive, our hearts would be sensibly affected at the evil sustained by their bountiful Saviour, that they might be no longer miserable.

O my soul, this is indeed the design of thy God in the institution of the adorable sacrament: but alas! the bad use we make of the graces so libe-

rally showered down upon us, deprives us of the fruits and effects which the adorable designs of a God would otherwise infallibly produce in our souls. We have seen a St. Ignatius, that ardent propagator of the greater glory of his Master, shed so many tears whilst celebrating the holy mysteries in which the death of Jesus is represented to us, as greatly to endanger his sight. This great lover of Jesus was then so sensibly affected as to faint under the pressure of an ardent love, as to be obliged to be removed from the altar, no longer able to support himself upon his feet. On a Christmas day, having twice celebrated the holy mysteries it had nearly cost him his life.'

How many other holy souls have been quite penetrated, quite immersed in this same condoling love. Have not the saints been heard to say that the sacrifice of the mass did not affect them less than that offered on mount Calvary of which it is the memorial; the same Jesus continuing without ceasing, to offer himself to the greatness of his eternal Father. But how lightly do we pass over these things! Were all that our religion proposes to us nothing but fables, could we act with greater coldness than at present? I must say it: the dead who never existed, fables which we know to be such, move us to tears, touch our hearts, occupy our memory; whilst the blood of a God streaming from every vein in the midst of a multiplicity of torments, so great, so extraordinary, that the sun retired with horror, the earth trembled, the rocks were rent asunder; the blood of a God, which daily flows and is daily given upon our altars, meets in our hearts with nothing but coldness and disaffection! alas, can this be possible!

Truly, truly do we believe what we profess to believe! Let us enter into ourselves, and look into the dispositions of our souls towards this memorial

of the passion of our Saviour. Let us reflect on what our past conduct has been, and what it ought to be in future. Let us then consider the tender love of this bountiful Saviour: he is (we have said it) the perfect model of mortification, which is so absolutely necessary for us: to render it more tolerable to us he lays before us his own pains, his own sufferings and holy death. If he, who is the only son of the eternal Father, enter into his glory by so thorny a path, it ought to be a subject of confusion to us to live in ease, whilst our Creator endures sufferings to the loss of his life: if we love him, we shall be happy in following him. But as he knows the repugnance we have for sufferings, in his death, he undergoes all that we are most averse from, whilst he has not surrounded the adorable sacrament with difficulties, but becomes like a tender parent, who distributes the best portion to his child, reserving the worst for himself.

It is related of a Spanish physician, who perceiving that a patient under his care could not be cured without eating of the tortoise; on the other hand, the sick person not being able to prevail upon himself to make use of this diet, he caused tortoises to be taken, to be cut in pieces, and given to fowls to be eaten, which being repeated for a considerable space of time, the fowls, by means of this food, partook of all the qualities of the tortoise, insomuch that the sick man having eat of them was cured. Behold, sufferings are the true remedy of our evils, of the pride and pleasure which have ruined us: but men would not have recourse to them; thus they continued to languish under their indisposition, which was hurrying them to eternal death. A God became incarnate, became a man of sorrows, was filled with opprobrium, gave himself for the food of man; and thus is man cured, if he will only make a holy use of the trifling sufferings to which he is

subject. They ought to appear sweet and amiable to him, after having witnessed those of the adorable Jesus; they will appear soft and easy, if we derive our virtue from the adorable sacrament, which is the bread of the strong.

XV. MOTIVE.

Jesus is in the adorable Sacrament both Host and Victim.

A *CLEAN oblation is sacrificed and offered to my name: because my name is great among the gentiles*, says the Lord of Hosts. Mal. 1. With reason the God of Sion should be adored in silence, since the infinite greatness of his Being can be comprehended only by himself. The seraphim, who are no less enlightened with knowledge than inflamed with love, who dwell in the regions of eternal brightness, surrounded by the splendor of the almighty, cover their faces, to shew that it is impossible for created nature to support the effulgency of the majesty of God, whom they see as he is and without cloud. Yet even these celestial spirits are unable to comprehend him.

It is this, that imposes silence on the most enlightened souls; from whom we learn that he speaks most properly of the greatness of God, who confesses that to speak worthily of him exceeds the power of man. This it is which prevents them during their meditations from reasoning on the divine perfections: for they find themselves plunged in an abyss of astonishment, in which the mind, dazzled by the splendor of his glory, is obliged to shut its eyes: and the soul, finding itself introduced into this mysterious darkness, only considers that God is above comprehension, and that he is far different from what we can think or say of him. This frequently causes the faithful soul to sigh in

the society of devout persons, as it knows that the majesty of God is far above the comprehension of the most enlightened saints.

St. Catharine of Sienna and the blessed Angel-lica de Foligni, when desired to speak of God, have said, that to speak of him was to blaspheme: for their great lights demonstrated to them that the most holy discourse is far from being able to describe him as he is. *Great is the Lord and worthy of praise, and of his greatness there is no end.*

We have great reason to bewail the unhappy darkness of this cursed world, and the blindness of men, who entertain such unworthy notions of the deity, who speak of him with so little respect, and who honor him with so little fear. We should go and proclaim from city to city, from province to province, from kingdom to kingdom, that men know not that God, whom they profess to serve. Ah! if men knew but a little of the greatness of God, never would they have the presumption to offend him, even by the least venial sin. When the holy Teresa, in the presence of her God, reflected on a single imperfection, she declares her hair stood an end through fear and horror. St. Catharine of Genoa protested, that the shadow of a venial sin was capable of depriving of life a person enlightened by the grace of God. The world knows not these truths, because it knows not God: but we, my soul, may conceive something of him, if we only consider him in this adorable sacrament.

In his incarnation the Son of God, as the apostle declares, *greatly debased himself:* and this debasement appears still more extraordinary on the cross, where the Son of the eternal Father dies, to prove the infinite authority of him, by whom he was sent. This was the utmost the divine wisdom could effect, in order to give to an infinite being the greatest glory that could be given him.

But he continues every day the same sacrifice; he makes in every part of the world the same offering, that the infinite greatness of his Father may be honored by a victim of infinite dignity. *A clean oblation is sacrificed and offered to my name: for my name is great among the gentiles, says the Lord of hosts.* Jesus by immolating himself as a victim in the holy sacrament, discloses to us the infinite greatness of God. O wonderful sight, did we but comprehend it! What should we say, o my soul, if God were to reveal to us that he intended to annihilate all mankind, to destroy the universe, and to reduce the angels and even his blessed Mother to their original nothing? Let us figure to ourselves fires kindled by the wrath of God, raging in every part of the earth, and consuming all things without reserve. This sight would undoubtedly strike us with terror. But that which takes place on our altars is infinitely more astonishing: for what would the annihilation of creatures be, but the return of nothing into nothing? But to see a God annihilate himself in the manner of which the apostle speaks, this is a mystery in which you, o ye angels of heaven, must lose yourselves, and which should cause men to speak of nothing but victims, and sacrifices, and humiliations. Let them come and learn at the foot of the altar and in the school of Jesus, that their life ought to be one continued death; that they should consider themselves as victims to be immolated to the divinity: and that they should permit no moment to elapse in which they do not offer sacrifice to the greatness of the God whom they adore. Let them learn, that they no longer belong to themselves; that they belong not to any creature; that they are the property of Jesus alone; and that with him they should become

victims to the greatness and sanctity of the eternal Father.

At the foot of the altar we should talk only of the sword to cut, to immolate, to sacrifice ourselves, and whateveris most dear to our heart. We should appear there like Abraham, with a knife in our hands to sacrifice Isaac, that is, our own self-love and our disorderly passions. Let us no longer complain of the opposition which they make; but let us remember, that the spirit of sacrifice should be inseparable from our will: let us think ourselves happy that we have it in our power to offer this victim to the Almighty: and when we feel that our inclinations rise up against our reason, let us in the same spirit suppress them to the greater glory of our God.

When we enter the church, let us reflect on that holy fear with which we should be penetrated in the presence of God, and of that purity of heart with which we ought to assist at the holy mass, where the God of all purity discloses himself to us. Let us then, as soon as we enter the church, tremble with awe: if we be conscious of the smallest fault, let us weep bitterly over ourselves; let us ask pardon of God, by an act of true contrition accompanied by love, resolving rather to die a thousand times than to commit any sin for the future. When that part of the mass is come in which the Son of God offers himself to his Father, I ask thee, o christian, whoever thou mayest be, what can hinder thee from uniting thyself to him, who thus sacrifices himself for thee? Is there any creature, father, mother, child, friend, passion, health, honor, beauty, pleasure or wealth, that thou oughtest not to sacrifice? Reflect a little on the nature of sin, which thou committest so easily; since it was necessary for a God to immolate himself repeatedly, in order to appease the anger of his

Father, excited by our offences. Reflect, that to repair the insult which thou hast offered to God, by endeavouring to captivate the mind or heart of his creatures, and thus presuming to make thyself his rival, the well-beloved Son of God has reduced himself to a state of the most abject humiliation; and that, as the vanity and ambition of creatures still continue, so the Son of God continues to debase himself by an infinity of humiliations.

This is the manner in which we must assist at these tremendous mysteries, if we wish to *adore in spirit and in truth*. These considerations must have considerable weight, if we examine them at leisure, and in the light of God. But I know that the world will not so consider them; for thou, o world, art reprobated by my God. Ah! how mean are thy notions of his greatness. As for you, o christian souls, I have but one word to say to you; that your whole life be one continued death. Bring from every quarter victims to the Lord, offer sacrifice to him: but remember, that no victim can be more agreeable than yourselves: renounce then the maxims of the world; annihilate in your mind the love of honors and pleasure; in your memory useless remembrances and vain reflections; and in your will every desire and every inclination; so that nothing may remain but *God alone, God alone, God alone.*

XVI. MOTIVE.

Jesus in the adorable Sacrament is the Delight of the immaculate Virgin and the Saints.

BEHOLD *the desired of nations comes.* Agg. 1. If Jesus be loved by a few faithful lovers in the most holy sacrament, there is no reason to

wonder at it. If he be the delight of the saints, we ought not to be astonished; for how can those souls, favored with so many heavenly lights, refuse to love the most lovely of our mysteries? What surprises me, is to see how other creatures can forget so loving a God. Let us consider the love the saints bear him, and we shall doubtless discover sufficient reasons to confound, humble, and make us ashamed, seeing how little we do for him, and how extremely ungrateful we are to him.

The blessed Magdalene de Pazzi visited her spouse in the blessed sacrament thirty times every day, a devotion with which she was inspired by Jesus himself: a sure proof that he desires it should be practised. Thirty times will appear much to those who do not love; but to a loving heart it will seem too little. Examine whether you be of the number of the lovers of Jesus, by the care you take in visiting this amiable Saviour in the most holy sacrament.

St. Francis Xavier, the great apostle of Japan, when quite fatigued with the hard labors of his apostolical functions, often took his rest in Sacristies, in order to spend part of the night more easily before the most holy sacrament.

St. Dominic used to do the same; and St. Catharine, a nun of the order instituted by that great saint, could not bear to be removed from the presence of Jesus in the eucharist. Sometimes she only took the short interval for her repose, which precedes the bell for matins, because while they were singing, there was some one to entertain her divine king.

Monsieur John, that true priest and worthy founder of the order of *our Blessed Lady of Mercy*, for a long time had no other bed than the altar-step; and it was not without a special privilege

of divine Providence that he died suddenly at Paris, some time ago, near the altar, where reposed the God of all love: the same love which made him live at the foot of our altars caused him also to die there.

That virginal emperor St. Henry, who lived in perfect chastity with his holy spouse St. Cunegunda, having in his travels visited Rome, passed whole nights before the blessed sacrament: from the first day of his arrival, Jesus reposing in our tabernacles, was his only repose both for body and soul.

The virtuous Lady Mary Diaz, who flourished last century, lodged, by permission of the bishop, in the tribune of one of the churches of Avila; nor did she ever go out of it during many years, except for the sake of confession and communion. Other lovers of the amiable Jesus not being able to procure such a favor, have endeavoured to partake of it, by procuring lodgings as near the churches as possible.

The blessed Margaret of Hungary, after having first communicated herself, held the communion cloth, though a princess, to the rest of the communicants.

St. Colette esteemed her eye-sight only in as much as it served her in contemplating the adorable host.

St. Winceslaus, king of Bohemia, reaped with his own hands the wheat, and gathered the grapes that were used at the holy sacrifice of the mass. Are you not stricken with admiration at the fervor and devotion which these fervent souls bore Jesus in the most holy sacrament? If I must give my opinion, I can with truth assure you that all this appears to me very trivial: for what can creatures, who are a mere nothing, do for the infinite majesty of God? D 3

If it be an undisputable truth that, the greatest actions of the saints are very little when compared to the infinite love of Jesus, alas! what will become of us when we consider our pitiful performances? But what excuse can we alledge concerning our affairs and occupations, which, as we pretend, will not allow us time to converse with Jesus in the adorable sacrament? We have seen a St. Francis Xavier charged with the affairs of a new world; that saint, who had preached the faith in twenty-four kingdoms, and baptized with his own hands more than twelve hundred thousand souls, still found leisure for this holy conversation. We have seen a St. Henry, emperor, amidst the labors attendant on the government of a kingdom, find sufficient time to spend whole nights in the presence of his dear Master. A St. Winceslaus, king, who cultivated the ground and took care of the vines, from which bread and wine were to be produced for the use of the altar.

We are neither apostles of a world, nor are we emperors or kings, and yet we have the effrontery to say, that we have not a few spare hours to employ in adoring the most holy sacrament: not reflecting that the devotions we are speaking of, are capable of procuring us the virtue of humility, and enkindling in us the fire of holy love, by rendering us imitators of those blessed saints.

It was with this design I have quoted the above examples. What fruit will you gather from them! Shall I make any impression on your hearts? Shall I not prevail on them to love my Master? With this view I conjure you to lift up the eyes of your soul, towards that admirable and incomparable heart of the ever blessed virgin, which exceeds in love those of all the saints; that heart the most loving and the most beloved; that

heart the very sanctuary of divine love, infinitely superior to the praise of all mortals; which alone has more love for Jesus in the most holy sacrament, than all the hearts which have been, are, or ever shall be: that heart always pure, which neither contracted original or committed actual sin; that heart always burning in the holy fires of pure love; which began to love as soon as it began to exist; which lived on love; and whose love of God alone was both its life and death. Let us examine well this heart all on fire with love; and near this furnace of divine love let us melt our frozen hearts; let us take fire, and conceive ardent desires of dedicating ourselves to the most holy sacrament. The divine eucharist must necessarily be the object of all our love, all our care, and our dearest complacency; but it is not to be conceived how much an unfeigned devotion to the mother of God contributes thereunto.

XVII MOTIVE.

Jesus is the Object of the Love and Respect of the Angels in the adorable Sacrament.

THOU *shalt also make two cherubim on each side of the oracle, and let them look towards one another, their faces being turned towards the propitiatory.* Exod. xxv. 20. These cherubim, which were on the two sides of the oracle, and which at the same time they looked at each other, had their eyes turned towards the mercy-seat, were a figure of the respect, admiration and love, which the choirs of angels bear this most august of all our mysteries. They look at one another with astonishment, in order to teach us what ought to be our surprise at the goodness of God.

St. John Chrysostom, according to the report of his disciple Nilus was often favored with visions

of these immortal spirits at the divine eucharist; who, by sensible signs, testified their humiliation and love to this mystery of consummate love: for they appeared in great numbers, clad in robes of great splendor and glory, their feet were naked and their eyes were fixed on the altar in the most profound silence and respect; giving us to understand by the magnificence of their garments, and the nakedness of their feet, their fixing their eyes on the holy mysteries, their silence and exterior comportment, that the person who enters our churches to adore the most holy sacrament, ought to be replenished with graces and adorned with virtues, having his feet bare, that is, disengaged from all earthly affections, and his whole heart fixed on God alone, taking particular care not to talk in church, but behave with the modesty of angels.

For this reason the prophet said: *I will sing psalms in the presence of the angels*, taking pattern from their love and respectful behaviour, to acquit himself worthily of his prayers and psalmody.

Those spirits which are truly in love are continually making their court to the Prince of glory in the most holy sacrament, they bear him company both night and day, they assemble round him in great numbers, especially during the celebration of the awful mysteries of the body and blood of Jesus Christ: and yet it is not for the angels but for us that Jesus is in the most holy sacrament.

He is there for men and they leave him, he is not there for the angels and they always accompany him whether in town or country; in a word, wherever the body of our amiable Saviour is to be found.

It is thus the angels love Jesus Christ, who did not die for their sins, but for ours; the Eternal Word prefering our nature to theirs, and choosing rather

to be a man than a seraphim. There are even doctors who assert, that a man is more beholden to Jesus Christ for a single good thought, than all the angels are for all their graces and glory; because we cannot have the least good thought which is not the price of the body and blood of Jesus, or which has not cost him his life: but this was not necessary to procure grace for the angels. Here let me entreat you seriously to reflect, that every good thought we have was purchased by the death of a God, and yet we so easily suffer them to slip away from us without making any use of them. Alas! we lose many precious moments which it is impossible sufficiently to estimate. How ought this love of the angels to inflame our zeal, and excite us to make our court with greater assiduity than we have hitherto done!

The venerable Mother Magdalene of St. Joseph, of the order of St. Teresa, was animated with an ardent desire of imitating the angels in their attendance on Jesus in the divine eucharist. She thought that the souls of certain persons after their death were appointed with the angels, to render continual respect and adoration to Jesus around our tabernacles. With this idea she would often cry out to her sisters, dear sisters, which of you will be of the number of those souls? For my part, I expect that favor; if you desire to find me after my death, seek for me near the holy tabernacles: and God permitted her after her death to appear in a vision, quite enraptured in these sanctuaries of love.

It is good to bear a particular devotion to the angels who are in our churches, and honor them by undergoing some mortification, practising some deeds of charity, communicating for their honor, that they may make us partakers of their

love and respect, intreating them to supply our weakness, and begging of them, that while we are asleep or occupied by the indispensable affairs of this life, they would love, adore and thank Jesus for us, promising them, that we will approve of whatever they shall say. Alas! how great is our misfortune who desire to address him properly, but do not know how; the angels alone, by their heavenly accomplishments, can make court to the king of the universe. We must, for this end, from time to time, unite ourselves to their love by renewing our intentions. O how sweet is it to converse with angels, to contract a friendship with those pure intelligences!

XVIII. MOTIVE.

Jesus is consumed with Love in the adorable Sacrament.

WHEN *he had loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* John xiii. 1. God's love for man had never a beginning, he loved him with an eternal love, as is visible from his drawing him from nothing to create him: in his continually preserving him, by the care of his loving providence, of which he has given a wonderful instance in his incarnation and bitter death on mount Calvary: in a word, *he has loved him to the end,* says the beloved evangelist, that dear disciple of love, that is to say, according to the words of Pope Urban, on the institution of the feast of the most holy sacrament, Jesus has loved us with a love that knows no bounds, with a transcendent and absorbing love, in giving himself to us in the divine eucharist, because by becoming our food, he desires to unite himself to us, by an union the most wonderful and loving we can conceive.

In the incarnation, the *Uncreated Word* only united itself personally to one human nature, and only dwelt in one country; but in the communion he really unites himself to all those who approach it, and concealed under the appearance of bread, is in every place where there are altars and churches. We must, in truth, confess, that the adorable sacrament is the master-piece of the love of a man God, and though God be all love, and every where love, he is still more so here than ever. *Through the too great charity with which he loved us*, says the apostle.

It is thus, o God, that you love the world; it is thus you love me; it is thus he loves you who read this treatise. But, o my Lord and my God, permit me, in your holy presence, to consider how the world loves you, how I love you myself. Reader, examine yourself. It is true, it is true, that the love of my God for his wretched creature, knows no bounds; and this worm of the earth, this mere nothing, would contract that which he owes his God.

Let us remove, o my heart, far from us, all such dishonorable thoughts, all designs unworthy the generosity of a true lover, which would prescribe certain limits to the ways of divine love, which cause many, nay, even the greatest part of mankind to say: I do not want to be a saint, it is enough if I do not offend God by mortal sin. O words, o sentiments worthy all the execration of those souls, who know what it is to love. Let me ask of you, who have considered these things attentively, if you loved any one with an extraordinary affection, if this person moreover was tied to you by every possible obligation, but should, in order to testify his love and friendship, content himself with assuring you that he had no intention to deprive you of life, or cut off your

arms or legs, would you be satisfied with such a return of friendship? Would not your heart be enraged at so black an ingratitude? Nevertheless, it frequently happens, that the infinite love of a God is treated in this manner, and that affront, which a creature would neither suffer nor put up with, we offer to God.

No, my soul, it is enough, the resolution is already taken; let us die a thousand deaths rather than harbour such unworthy notions; let us aspire with courage to the ways of holy perfection, since they are the ways of a generous and faithful love. Let us never say, I will love God so much, but let us love him as much as he requires of us, as much as the extent of his graces will permit us: let us love him as the saints did, purposing to ourselves those wonderful actions and amiable virtues, which divine love caused them to perform: let us march in their footsteps, in poverty, in scorn, in sufferings, which are the paths of pure love: let us remember that the God of their love ought to be the God of ours, that our hearts have the same Jesus consumed in the adorable sacrament for the love of us.

SECOND TREATISE,

CONTAINING A FEW PRACTICES TO PROMOTE THE ADORATION AND LOVE OF THE ADORABLE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR.

Introduction.

COME, *let us adore and fall down before God, let us weep before the Lord who made us, because he is the Lord our God, but we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.* Ps. 94. It is the property of souls thoroughly penetrated with divine love, who have been favored with great lights concerning the mysteries of God, not only to offer their vows and pay their respects to the Majesty of their Sovereign, but also to invite all others to do the same. They desire, says the seraphic Teresa, to invite all men to the love of God. They cannot contain the sacred fires which consume them, without letting the flames appear.

See, says that great lover of Jesus, St. Augustine, how the psalmist is not content with alone magnifying the Lord, but calls and presses all the world to sing forth eternal praises to his God. Come, says that holy king, let us all adore and prostrate ourselves before the greatnesss of God, let us shed tears of joy in his divine presence, because he who has made us and drawn us out of nothing, vile and wretched creatures as we are,

is moreover desirous to love us as his dear people, and treat us as the sheep of his pastures.

These are the great mercies of the Lord, which he desires to sing eternally, which he desires to announce to all men, the consideration of which makes him faint with love and admiration. But let me ask of thee, o my soul, what he would have done if he had seen what we see, if he had known what we know? What would he have said to all men? What would he have said to all creatures? O how happy are those eyes, which discover the truths which our holy religion teaches us. Would to God that men understood them, and would once for all open their eyes to the light of faith, the face of our churches would be greatly changed. The ways of Sion would no longer weep that they are deserted. Love would make us go, yes, even run and fly to our sanctuaries to accompany, and render our adorations to the amiable Jesus.

Come, let us adore. It is this love which excites me to the utmost of my power, to invite all men to adore the most holy sacrament of the altar, and for this end to suggest to them the following practices.

I. PRACTICE.

To communicate often, but worthily.

TAKE *and eat, this is my body.* Mat. xxvi. It would be little to the zealous and devout lovers of the most holy sacrament of the altar, to adore or accompany it, if they did not also receive it into their breasts by holy communion. Jesus has said it, and it is but reasonable he should be obeyed: *Take and eat, this is my body;* the christian therefore is obliged to take, to receive, and to eat it.

This commandment appeared so important to the church, that in the first ages of christianity, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, all the faithful who assisted at the holy mysteries, were obliged to communicate every day. If the church has since judged it proper not to enforce this obligation under any heavy punishment, it is the hardness of christians' hearts that have forced her to it: her desire is nevertheless, according to the observation of the last general council, that communion should be as much frequented as in those early times. The reason is, because this divine sacrament is instituted for our nourishment; and as our bodies can neither exist or live without their proper food, in like manner our souls are under a like necessity of the celestial food, which the God of all goodness has provided for them in the excess of his love: for this end, the holy sacrament is not only called *bread*, but also *daily bread.*

This is the signification given by St. Augustin, St. Ambrose and St. Jerome, to those words of the Lord's prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*, which is confirmed by St. Matthew, who calls it supersubstantial bread. St. Cyprian says, that when we ask for our daily bread, it is Jesus Christ whom we ask for. Hence St. Augustin addressing christians, says, "why at the year's end only, will you receive that bread which is for every day, take daily what will daily profit you?" St. Ambrose says the same.

The manna was a figure of this sacrament, which it was necessary to gather every morning before sun-rise, to give us to understand that we ought to communicate every day.

The devil who desires nothing but our death, knowing this to be our life, uses every effort to hinder us from it. If this enemy of the love of

Jesus had sufficient power, says the devout author of the Imitation of Christ, he would entirely do away with the sacred communion; and, in truth, if we want to procure the death of any one, however vigorous he may be, and however well he may enjoy health, we have only to withdraw his food, and we shall soon see him fall off, lose strength, and expire. *I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread.*

In the earthly paradise, God forbids our first parents to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the devil persuades them to eat of it. In the law of grace, God commands us to eat his body; the devil says, do not eat it. But since Jesus desires it, we must obey; to act otherwise would be to frustrate him of the principal end he had in view in the institution of this sacrament of love.

We only pretend to honor him by our perpetual adorations, if we do not communicate; without this, he will never receive what he expects from us. I see this amiable lover of the sons of men, bearing himself in his own hands through his excessive love: I hear from his mouth, that oracle of all truth, these loving words: *Take and eat.* Alas! it is very true he deserves infinite adorations wherever he is, and consequently in the most holy sacrament; but his principal aim in the eucharist is to unite himself to us, entering into our bodies, and giving himself for our food, that he may become one and the same thing with us, or rather that we may be made one and the same thing with him.

He does not say to his apostles: prostrate yourselves on the earth, tremble in my presence; but he says to them, *Take and eat.* Doubtless if the eucharist had been principally instituted

to excite terror in our hearts, the great Jesus would appear in a very different manner. The throne of his greatness, where he sits at the right hand of his Father, is well calculated to astonish men, who are taken with outward appearances; but Jesus conceals himself under the appearance of bread, because he desires to become our spiritual nourishment, as bread is that of the body; it would therefore be offering a great insult to his love not to approach him.

St. Teresa, very properly makes use of the example of a great lord, who should tenderly love a person of low condition. If, says that ardent lover of Jesus, this person abashed by the meanness and poverty of her birth, or withheld through fear or respect, should not only refuse to speak to this lord, but on the contrary should do all in her power to avoid his presence, such conduct would undoubtedly much offend his goodnes; for nothing is more intollerable to love than not to meet with a return of affection, for which reason this seraphic saint communicated every day.

St. Catharine of Sienna fell sick every day on which she could not communicate. The blessed Magdalene de Pazzi, from her infancy, had an extreme desire to frequent holy communion, which not being permitted on account of her tender years, she always kept close to her mother on the days of her communion, experiencing great pleasure in the company of those who had been feasted with such divine food; and one of the reasons which determined her in the choice of the monastry wherein she entered, was that the nuns communicated every day. Unhappy world, which miserably deprives itself of this heavenly bread; unhappy all those souls, which are not consumed with an excessive hunger and thirst for the body and

blood of the Lord of all things, who, attached to earthly satisfactions, give themselves little trouble concerning the mysteries of divine grace. O men, what do you think of? How long will you be heavy of heart, preferring the miserable gratifications of flesh and blood, the false pleasures of the world to the noble and true delights of the God of paradise.

Having it in our power to feed on God himself, and to neglect the opportunity, is what the enlightened soul will never be able to comprehend. Yes, I maintain it before heaven and earth, that a heart that loves with truth and sincerity, would sooner forego an empire with all the pleasures and honors of the world, rather then stay away from the holy communion, though but for a single day. It is true, by the order of God it may be omitted through obedience, submission, sickness or some lawful impediment, which arrives in the order of divine Providence, but to abstain from it through negligence or imperfection surpasses all understanding. Is it then true that the greatest part of men communicate seldom; and that many, unhappy wretches that they are, ought never to approach the holy table: some rendering themselves unworthy through their criminal attachment to creatures and the love of this perishable world; others through their desire of revenge, money and vanities; and thus the God of all greatness is abandoned, and a mere nothing preferred before him. Dear Lord! you see this, and you suffer it without uttering a word. Permit me at least, the last of creatures, to speak for you. *Open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise.*

Ah men, is it thus you love the God of love, is it thus you despise such an excess of charity, is it thus you exalt the creature above your God! Let who will conceive it, that you gave preference every

day to worldly attachments before those which you owe your God. But I must inform you that the Lord is at the door, his judgments are near at hand, you shall die, and that sooner than you imagine; yes, the Lord my God will exact a rigorous account for your contempt of his goodness. O adorable Jesus! this is my consolation, that in a short time hence, you will do yourself justice against your enemy the world, and its foolish admirers.

Tremble ye who read this, nothing is more condescending than Jesus in the most holy sacrament, and nothing will be more terrible and tremendous, on the day of his vengeance. At the moment of our death we shall have to give a rigorous account, not only of our bad communions, but of every time we have neglected to communicate, when we could do it in the order of God. The parable in the gospel is awful above all expression. A man makes a feast, and invites many guests who excuse themselves; he, justly irritated, protests that not one of those invited shall be admitted to his table. There is no heart, however confident, who does not tremble at the following reflections. 1st. They beg to be excused: 2ly. They alledge good reasons, that they have bought estates, merchandise, or that they are newly married. Does it not seem very reasonable to excuse a person invited from attending the feast, because it is the day of his marriage? But we who give ourselves no trouble to ask pardon of the divine Majesty, for absenting ourselves from the sacred feast to which he invites us, for much more frivolous excuses, what are we to expect from his justice?

But see how those guests are punished, not for behaving ill at the table of the Lord who invites them, but because they do not come: the same will be our punishment. It is true that to com-

municate we must leave off all attachments, neither wife, children, estates, merchandise, nor farm can afford any excuse. We must bid adieu to corrupt nature, we must break our chains, in a word, we must leave all, and do all, for the love of a God, who has done all and quitted all for the love of us.

II. PRACTICE.

To behave oneself with Silence and Respect in the Presence of the adorable Sacrament, and prevent, as much as possible, the Irreverences which are committed in our Churches.

I *WILL adore in thy holy temple in thy fear.* The psalmist assures us, that it is not without fear, he adores the Lord in his holy temple; and the Lord bids us in Leviticus, to tremble in the presence of his sanctuary. *Be afraid of my sanctuary, for I am the Lord.* Because, though it be very certain that God is every where, he nevertheless resides in a special manner in those places, which he has sanctified and set apart for his worship.

This ought to give us a great esteem and respect for our churches, of which the temples and holy places of the old law were only shadows. My Lord and my God! must our blindness increase and our darkness be augmented, because we walk in the open day-light? Must we know God less, because he has manifested himself to us?

He resides corporally in our churches, o sweet and astonishing truth! and we go into them with a liberty and boldness, we should be loath to take in the houses of grandees or the palaces of princes. David trembles, and Jacob is seized

with fear, on seeing some particular favor bestowed by God on certain places; and we at the sight of God himself, whose body dwells upon our altars, remain insensible, we even see irreverences which greatly shock a soul in which there remains any fear of God. *Keep thy foot on entering the house of the Lord.* Eccls. 4. Take care, says the Holy Ghost, of what you are about to do, when you dispose yourself to enter into the house of the Lord, giving us to understand what reflections we ought to make on the holiness of the place whither we are going; yet, notwithstanding all this, we see christians enter our churches, some talking, others laughing, or behaving very indecently. O that my eyes were a fountain of tears, to deplore without ceasing the blindness of mankind!

No infatuation can certainly be compared to this. Ask christians, why they go to church. They will answer, that it is to offer up their prayers to God, though their behaviour denotes only mockery. A wretched creature paying a visit to a person of very mean condition, would be sorry to act thus. How many sins are committed on this occasion?

Our churches are apparently asylums for sinners to obtain mercy, and yet it is even here where they add to the load of their crimes. What would not a criminal do accused of high treason, if being brought before his offended monarch, from whom he was to expect nothing but fire and the severest punishments, he should receive a free pardon? Would this wretch again appear in arms, or aim another blow at the life of his sovereign? Behold the condition of most christians: they are in very truth guilty of the death of the King of heaven and earth, and this, as often as they have committed mortal sin.

We cannot doubt of a truth of faith which the scripture itself teaches us: *again crucifying.* In the very presence of the God of eternity, they behave with less respect than they would observe towards a person of a moderate rank; they laugh or entertain themselves with their worldly affairs. Is this believing in God? Is this believing the real presence of Jesus in the adorable sacrament? Is it not rather scoffing at the divinity? But what shall we say of those ladies, who at the same time that they open their mouths in prayer, open their bosoms to immodesty; who addressing the God of their salvation in our churches, do not quit them before they have caused the spiritual death of many unhappy souls; who under the pretext of piety, wage war against the divinity himself, attacking him at the foot of his altars. They force from their Saviour the souls which have cost him his life, to give them to his adversary the devil, and all this, to appear agreeable, and gratify the eyes of their unchaste beholders.

What shall we say of those persons who stare about them with looks of lasciviousness, whose imaginations are filled with filthy or vindictive thoughts, even in the presence of the God of purity and love.

Examine these things, christian reader, and see if you have not yourself been guilty of one or more of these terrible disorders; consider, in particular, if you have not talked for a long time during the celebration of the holy mass, on Sundays and holy-days; for if the time has been considerable, it is doubtless a mortal sin: and if you have been the cause of others talking, your sins will be multiplied in proportion to the number of persons you have made to sin.

See if you have taken care that your servants,

or those over whom you have any power, have behaved themselves with the modesty which the sanctity of our temples requires. St. Chrysostom is still more severe, and assures us that not only those who talk or amuse themselves in our churches but also they who do not reprimand them, deserve to be crushed by the thunder-bolts of heaven. The son of God has given us a notable example of the zeal he had for the house of God: never was there any one so meek as he; but when he found that the house of his Father was profaned, what does he do? not content with only reprimanding the offenders, he makes a scourge, and with infamy drives out of the temple those wretches who were dishonoring it. It was then his disciples called to mind those words: *The zeal of the house of God has devoured me.*

But what effect has this holy zeal produced in us? Where are the persons we have admonished? Where are those we have corrected? Where is the person to be found who has defended the honor of his heavenly Master? The example of the gentlemen of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet of Paris is well worthy imitation, who to prevent children from committing any irreverence during divine service, appoint them a certain place in the church to kneel in, where being all assembled, an ecclesiastic presides over them to see that they behave properly, and offer up their prayers to God with becoming modesty.

But how rare is this zeal among christians, who at the day of judgment will be condemned by the infidels themselves? Yes, the Turks will rise up against us, demanding justice of our impieties; those same Turks who scarce dare to move in their temples, who will not permit any one on horse back to pass before the door without making him dismount, under severe punishments. Those very

Mahometans, many of whom have put out their eyes, after having seen the sepulchre of that wicked impostor Mahomet, esteeming nothing on earth worthy their regard after such a sight. Shame and confusion on christianity! Alas! we are far from shewing such reverence. On the contrary, we do not hesitate to talk and commit irreverences in the presence of Jesus himself, who resides in our tabernacles to the great astonishment of the attending angels.

But how strange is the hardness of the human heart! On the very days we go to commemorate the sufferings of our Saviour, I fear, we are too often led thither to hear the music or witness worldly vanity. But if, as the prophet Amos says, a *woe* is pronounced against those *who enter the house of the Lord with pomp*, what misery will they not have to undergo who behave irreverently? Christian soul, never approach the holy places but with a profound respect and confusion, weeping bitterly over your sins, and asking pardon, with the most sincere humility, from the God of mercies.

III. PRACTICE.

To take care of the exterior Things which regard the Honor of the adorable Sacrament, such as the Churches, Ornaments, &c.

HE *who fears God, neglects nothing.* Ezech.7. Who will give us the grace to be thoroughly delivered from our blindness? Who will bestow upon us a small ray of that admirable light mentioned by the Prince of the apostles, that we may look upon and esteem every thing according to it, and not after our own light, which is weak and deceitful.

It is that grace we ask for, which is only granted to him who truly fears God, which causes him to

neglect nothing belonging to his service, which makes the least things appear great in his eyes, as long as they appertain to the divine worship. This is obvious in the conduct of the holy church, which is guided, in every thing, by the Holy Ghost himself. What wonderful care does she not take in every thing that concerns her divine spouse. Among the orders she has established we may easily trace in those of porter and acolothist, what account she makes of the least matters which regard her God. The porter's employment is to open and shut the church doors, ring the bells, take care of the sacristy, adorn the altars, and turn those out of the churches that behave improperly. The acolothist's duty is to light the candles, prepare the fire and incence, carry the candles, prepare the wine and water for the cruets, and serve at mass.

It is the subdeacon's place to wash the palls and corporals, to arrange the sacred vessels and keep them clean, to furnish the altar with bread for the communicants, &c. &c. &c. as marked in the pontifical. Behold what esteem the church has for every thing that belongs to the worsnip of her sacred spouse.

The souls who fear God neglect nothing: thus even in our days we have seen great prelates not disdain to sweep the churches with their own hands; and it is a well known fact, that the emperor Constantin carried upon his shoulders twelve baskets of earth towards building a church.

The blessed Mauricius, a Dominican, with a wonderful devotion, went from door to door to beg oil for the lamp, and there have been princes who have esteemed themselves happy to clean them and supply them with the necessary oil. The

blessed Victoria, foundress of the Celestins, was overjoyed to spin the flax intended for corporals,

The blessed Cicily of the third order of Minims, was highly pleased to wash the linen for the use of churches. This is what the saints did, this is what all those do who love and fear the Lord; but can we say as much? How many churches may we see in a ruined condition, while comfortable houses arise on every side for the accommodation of miserable creatures? How many churches where the sacred body of the adorable Jesus cannot be lodged with decent respect, while wretched man, reposes at ease in sumptuous buildings amidst enchanting decorations.

Alas! how often have I been a sorrowful witness to the desolation of our altars, to the deplorable ruins of the house of the God of all greatness. Is it thus we receive, thus we treat this heavenly Visitor. Every thing ought to convince us more and more, that in respect of the world, *God is an unknown and hidden God.*

O my dear Lord, how is my soul overwhelmed with affliction and my heart drowned with grief! What! shall your own creatures treat you thus? Shall they not procure for you if not a magnificent, at least a decent habitation? O pastors, o priests, o lords, o ladies, o each of you faithful, what are you thinking of? Will you refuse to contribute that *crown* which you are so ready to squander away on yourselves, to procure a comfortable dwelling for the body of the son of God?

But what words do I hear? *I am not obliged to it!* What! are we not obliged to our God, our Creator, our Saviour, our King and our *All?*

Consider what you do, not only for princes whom you are always ready to serve, but for yourselves, for your own body; and blush in the presence of

God and his angels, at your ingratitude, more worthy of hell than of a creature, in whom there are any remains of christianity.

I will leave you now to reflect on what you mean to do; and shall conclude this practice, by reminding you of the respect you ought to bear the ministers of the holy altar.

You are not ignorant that the great St. Martin made them serve his deacon, at his table, before the emperor. You also know that there have been monarchs who would not sit among the priests in the quoir, through respect for the eminence of their station; and to go no further back than our own times, the great St. Charles Borromeo, would never permit the vice-roy to enter the quoir of his cathedral; and when he was asked what he would have done if the king of Spain had come. he replied, that as his majesty had the title of *catholic*, he would never attempt to act contrary to the orders of the church, and consequently would not occupy the seats designed for the priests, whom not only men obey as they do kings. but God himself, says the eloquent St. John Chrysostom, submitting himself to them, as he formerly did to the blessed virgin and her virginal spouse St. Joseph.

The late Mr. de Renty, whose life was a model of a true christian, receiving a visit from some people of distinction, and observing a priest among their attendants retire to a remote corner when they entered the hall, immediately quitted the company, and, making up to him, entertained him with familiar conversation for a considerable time, to the no small astonishment of his visitors, who were unaccustomed to see such ceremonies. He asked pardon of God for having once inadvertently passed before a priest, and was always wont to serve the missioners in vessels of silver, through the esteem he had for their sacred character.

There have been saints who have kissed the ground on which they stood; but how do we behave towards these anointed of the Lord?

A gentleman will treat his priest in a shameful manner, the very priest who instructs his children, shall be looked upon no better than as a footman; my lord and my lady, particularly if of great quality, will scarce admit them to their tables, others give them the very lowest place, while even the scholars are placed before their masters; princes and princesses will refuse them that honor and respect which they grant their stable-boys; and still they pretend to be devoutly attached towards the most holy sacrament, while they treat its ministers with such indignities! But o priests, let no worldly considerations whatever make you cringe or debase yourselves to the great dishonor of our holy religion and its awful mysteries. The same ages which have witnessed all the powers of the world humbled before persons of the same sacred character as yourselves, have also seen priests who neither feared or expected any thing from any living creature.

IV. PRACTICE

To prepare Children with particular Care for their first Communion.

WHO feedeth among the lilies Cantic. 2. God is not only holy but holiness itself: as he is in himself infinite, ineffable incomprehensible, so his holiness is infinite, ineffable, and incomprehensible: his holiness is essential to him not depending on any other, but all other holiness comes from him, because he is essentially *the eternal law and love of God* in which true holiness consists. He is the object, the root, the source, the principle and cause of all holiness; he alone is holy, he alone is

good, he alone is perfect, because he alone is essentially so.

The holiness of all creatures, even that of the hierarchies of the angels and of the blessed virgin, are nothing when compared with the sanctity of God. This it is that ought to make christians in every part of the world veil their faces, through a holy shame, when placed in his divine presence. This it is that fills the seraphim with astonishment, and causes them continually to sing that canticle: *holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of armies.*

But what infinite mercy must the Lord have for his creatures, who so lovingly communicates to them not only his grace but himself. He came down from heaven to converse with us: he has, as it were, annihilated himself to procure us every thing. If the heavenly intelligences are continually admiring his greatness, doubtless they no less wonder at his voluntary abasement, and what ought christians to do, persuaded as they are of these splendid truths. God is the holy of holies, and nevertheless he desires to dwell in our breasts: *but what society is there between light and darkness?* I now clearly perceive why he bids us *to be holy, because he himself is holy.* Why do the angels among those divine perfections which are equal, particularly adore his holiness? If he desires to dwell with us, to be received by us, he certainly desires to find our souls pure and clean; and it ought to be our study to imitate him in a perfection which is so dear to him. For how shall we receive purity itself with polluted lips and fetid mouths? If by the mouth of the psalmist he reproaches the sinner, who has the temerity to speak to him, what, alas! will he not do and say to him who lodges him in his breast?

For this reason the Holy Ghost assures us, that

those *who fear God, will prepare their hearts and sanctify their souls in his presence.* His glory is at stake, since he desires to establish his dwelling among us. But our zeal for his interests, ought not only to induce us to give him our own hearts, but also to procure him as many others as we can: particularly as this divine spouse reposes no where so agreeably as among the *lilies* of innocence, we ought to use all our endeavours to preserve the innocence of children, or to draw them from their imperfections, to the end that Jesus coming into their hearts by their first communion may find them acceptable.

O fathers and mothers carry *lilies* to the amiable Jesus, by disposing your children by innocence and purity for the holy communion. O priests of the Lord, prepare fit abodes for him, by omitting no care to preserve the souls of your penitents in the holy ways of christianity. On whatever side we turn our eyes we find subjects for infinite confusion. The holy scriptures teach us, what extraordinary pains were taken in the education of persons destined for the service of earthly princes, and shall we remain insensible to the honor and glory of the God of paradise, or refuse to contribute our endeavours to train up living temples for his infinite Majesty? For this end we must shew them a good example, and not approve of those things by our actions which we reprobate by our words. They will much sooner imitate what they see, than practice what they hear.

We must frequently entertain them on the holiness of our religion, and in their presence, make great account of the maxims of the gospel, condemning the corrupt ones of the world. Alas! how many fathers and mothers ruin their children by their discourses. When they hear nothing esteemed but honors, pleasures and riches, we must

not be surprised if they contract an affection for them. We must choose them good masters, and such persons who lead a christian life, and will have a true zeal for the salvation of their souls; recommending them to some one replenished with the spirit of God, who will give them salutary instructions for their salvation: above all, we must be careful not to send them to schools where boys and girls are mixed together. With regard to girls, it is much to be desired that they should be brought up in schools where there is no admittance to men, for they cannot be too watchful over their chastity. The corruption of the world is greater than can be expressed, and those who have the care of churches know, that notwithstanding their utmost diligence, impurity unhappily succeeds in sending whole multitudes to hell. Parents ought never to suffer their children, though of the same sex, to sleep together, much less ought married persons to permit their children to sleep with them, or have their beds in the same room; in a word, no freedoms must be tolerated between boys and girls, though even in play, as the holy bishop of Geneva advises.

They ought to remove from them all occasions of sin, all the pomps and vanities of the world, which they renounced in baptism, all romances and other books which are not edifying. They should take particular care to make them frequent confession, particularly if they are near death, though they may not yet have attained their seventh year, not so much regarding their age, as the ripeness of their capacities, which generally is very forward. Histories of great veracity inform us, that God has punished children from five to ten years old very rigorously; and indeed, experience forcibly evinces, that the greatest part of them have sufficient discernment to know right from

wrong, and consequently to sin. When the time of their first communion approaches, they ought to be recommended to the care of some devout ecclesiastic, to instruct them in the truths of this divine mystery, and prepare them for a general confession, which is very necessary to correct the faults in their former confessions, which ordinarily are not few, and to train them up to the good practices of which their age is capable.

It would surprise us if we knew with how much fury the devils seek to rob God of the first fruits of our actions. They have been forced, by the authority of the church, to confess, though much against their will, that some of them are deputed to hinder persons, when they awake, from giving their first thoughts to God. If this be the case, there is little doubt, but they will do all in their power to make something go wrong in our first communion. It is this that ought to call forth the zeal of those devoted to the holy sacrament, generously to labor in this tender soil for the honor and glory of their divine master.

V. PRACTICE.

To have an Horror of Impiety and Hatred, which are two Sins greatly opposite to the holy Sacrament of the Altar.

WISDOM *will not enter into a malevolent soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sin.* Sap. 1. The amiable Jesus being at the point of his bitter death, desiring that all the faithful should be tied together by the same union, with which they are united to himself, asks this favor of God, as a pledge of his paternal love towards him, and as a recompence for all that he has hitherto done or suffered. O my Father, says the amiable Jesus, I do not only ask you for those who are now with

me, but also for all who shall ever believe in me: that they may be one, as we are one, that they may be consummated in one.

For this end he instituted the most holy sacrament, called by the Fathers, the sacrament of union, the mystery of peace. It is the sacrament of union, because by it we communicate and are united in Jesus Christ, and to Jesus Christ, who by giving us his body for our food, unites himself as intimately to us, as the food is united to the person who takes it, which is as strict an union as can be: so that as Jesus Christ only lives from the life of his father, the christian who communicates ought only to subsist from the life of Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that the sacrament is called the *communion*: we are all united together, because we are all nourished at the same table, we eat the same bread, we receive that *Spirit* which ought to be the same in all the faithful, since they ought to have no other than that of Jesus, who is the soul that animates their lives.

These truths clearly discover how much the sins of hatred and impurity are contrary to this divine sacrament. The great St. Chrysostom, considering this mystery of peace, protests, that whosoever desires to approach it, ought not to harbour the least aversion from his neighbour; which truth is confirmed by the Holy Ghost himself in the gospel, where he commands us, that if, when at the altar, we remember that our brother has any thing against us, we must leave there our present, and go find our brother, and be reconciled to him. From whence you may perceive how necessary a condition the love and union of our neighbour is, for approaching to the holy communion; for the Son of God does not say if you mean to approach to the holy altar, but if you are on the point of partaking of the holy mysteries. Can we conceive

any thing more pressing than the obliging a person to leave his offering? Might not that well-beloved Son of the eternal Father have said: offer your gift, and then go and be reconciled? but no, he insists on this reconciliation taking place before he will unite himself to us.

This is not all, for he does not only require of our hearts, that they should be without hatred against any one; but he moreover insists upon us not giving any one cause of hatred against us; for which end we must go immediately in search of them, even though we abandon for a time his service, and our spiritual devotions. It is a deplorable evil among christians, that members of the same body should be divided; whenever we see any body about to become a prey to such divisions, we ought to do all in our power to prevent them. St. Teresa addressing her sisterhood, says, if there be any one who is not in perfect charity, let the others pray for her, let them sigh for her, let them weep for her, because, says that admirable saint, it were better that the monastry were burnt down, than for such faults to exist within its walls.

St. John the almoner, patriarch of Alexandria, after having consecrated the body and blood of Jesus Christ, did not dare to communicate, remembering that one of his deacons had an animosity against him. For which reason, though he was saying mass in the great patriarchal church before a great concourse of people, he quitted the altar, and went into the sacristy to embrace that unfortunate deacon, whom he left much astonished at his charity; he then returned to the altar, and finished the sacrifice with great composure. Thus they act who are fortified with the spirit of God, practising every thing which their Master orders them. We must either renounce christianity, or lay aside all enmity; we must either de-

ny Jesus Christ or love our enemies for his sake; we must not simply content ourselves with wishing them no harm, but we must give them every testimony of a sincere friendship.

St. Augustin assures us, that this is not a mere counsel, but an express commandment. It is a condition attached to christianity, whose law is that of love; so that Tertullian says, "if I am asked the definition of a christian, I will answer, that it is a person who is in love with all the world and hates nobody." Reader, examine well thy conscience, sound thy heart, but let it be done seriously and in good earnest. See how it behaves towards thy neighbour; for I declare to thee from the most high God, if thou perceivest in it any hatred or dispositions to disoblige those who have disobliged it, thou art then the enemy of the most holy sacrament, thou hast conspired with the devil against its honor and glory, thou art in the most miserable condition possible; and if thou dost not change, all is over, and despair must be thy lot. No more must it expect heaven, the blessed virgin, Jesus Christ or the God of paradise; if these do not move it, its hell is already begun, where with the apostate angels it will burn to endless eternities.

The most holy sacrament of the altar is not only the mystery of peace, not suffering the least enmity, but it is also the sacrament of purity. The divine king of angels who resides therein, is the son of a virgin, the spouse of virgins, the friend of virginity, and the author of all chastity. How can the unchaste, who shall never see God, expect to accompany the faithful in being united to the divine eucharist, polluted flesh be joined to the spotless and virginal flesh of Jesus? Yes, we are the temples of the living God; yet the

municate we must leave off all attachments, n[illegible] ther wife, children, estates, merchandise, [illegible] farm can afford any excuse. We must bid ad[illegible] to corrupt nature, we must break our chains, i[illegible] word, we must leave all, and do all, for the l[illegible] of a God, who has done all and quitted all [illegible] the love of us.

II. PRACTICE.

To behave oneself with Silence and Respect in [illegible] Presence of the adorable Sacrament, and pre[illegible] as much as possible, the Irreverences which [illegible] committed in our Churches.

I WILL adore in thy holy temple in thy [illegible] The psalmist assures us, that it is not w[illegible] our fear, he adores the Lord in his holy tem[illegible] [illegible] the Lord bids us in Leviticus, to tremb[illegible] the presence of his sanctuary. *Be afraid o[illegible] [illegible] I am the Lord.* Because, th[illegible] [illegible] that God is every where [illegible] [illegible] resides in a special manner in [illegible] [illegible] which he has sanctified and set [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] ought to give us a great esteem and [illegible] [illegible] churches, of which the temples [illegible] [illegible] of the old law were only shad[illegible] [illegible] must our blind[illegible] [illegible] our darkness be augmented, bec[illegible] we walk in the open day-light? Must [illegible] [illegible] because he has manifested [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] in our churches, o[illegible] [illegible] and we go into them [illegible] [illegible] we should be loa[illegible] [illegible] grandees or the pa[illegible] [illegible] trembles, and Jacob is [illegible]

with fear, or seeing some particular favor bestow- ed by God on certain places, and we at the sight of God himself, whose body dwells upon our altars, remain insensible, we even [illegible] which greatly shock a soul in which there remains any fear of God. Keep thy foot [illegible] house of the Lord [illegible] the Holy Ghost [illegible] when you dispose yourself [illegible] of the Lord, given [illegible] tions we ought to make [illegible] place wherein we are [illegible] all this, we see christians [illegible] some talking, others laughing [illegible] indecently. O that we [illegible] tears, to deplore with [illegible] mankind!

No inhabitant or [illegible] his. Ask christians [illegible] They will answer [illegible] ers to God, through [illegible] mockery. A [illegible] a person of very [illegible] to act thus. How [illegible] his occasion?

Our churches are [illegible] ers to obtain [illegible] hey add to the [illegible] would not a [illegible] being [illegible] from whom he [illegible] he severest [illegible] pardon? [illegible] arms, [illegible] reign? [illegible] they are [illegible] King of [illegible] they have [illegible]

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God of infinite sanctity dwells only in holiness, his spirit quits the habitations of the voluptuous.

This vice is so shameful, that the most abandoned seek the darkest and most retired corners to be hidden from the eyes of man; and shall these wretches, immersed in such abominations, dare to appear before God, or receive his pure body into their hideous breasts? The soul which is truly devout to the most holy sacrament, ought to regard this vice with horror, and esteem the greatest of abominations. The very thought should make them tremble, and make them as earnest to reject it as they would a burning coal, which should fall upon their cloaths: well remembering that it is a spark which may eternally enkindle in them the fire of hell. They ought to know that whenever they deliberately think or take pleasure in such infamous imaginations, it is no little sin; and it is in vain to think of flying or avoiding sin if we do not avoid the occasions.

Whoever would remain chaste, ought to avoid the company of woman, unless forced by necessity, and even then must be very circumspect, for many even with the intention of assisting souls and conducting them towards paradise, have themselves unhappily fallen into hell. We must abhor all privacy and fondling, all words of a double meaning and soft songs, also the reading of books which excite to worldly love, though they may not be all together immodest. A woman never ought to admit of freedoms from men, though in friendship and jest: for it is bad to look at a woman too attentively, still worse to entertain her with vain talk, but it is the extremity to proceed to indiscreet familiarities. Tender friendships between persons of a different sex, though not absolutely bad, are nevertheless to be

studiously avoided, according to that of the scripture, *He who loves danger shall perish in it:* and St. Francis de Sales says, that those friendships which are contracted with no ill design, oftentimes end in infamous brutalities, though they may have continued innocent for many years.

The sôul who truly loves the most holy sacrament, will always be very tender of her chastity; it is her most beloved virtue, and she is joyfully carried away with its lovely attractions; she cries out with the apostle: is it possible I should prostitute to unlawful pleasures the members which belong to Christ? She remembers the fate of Oza, who rashly approached the ark without being pure, and she is seized with fear, knowing how much purity one ought to possess who frequents the blessed sacrament.

But what shall those women say, those partizans of satan and enemies of the King of virgins, who by their affected allurements and luxuriant dresses, by the turn of their eyes and the nakedness of their necks, become living occasions of sin, not only sending their own souls to the devil, but unhappily dragging many others along with them, whom their cruel temptations have irretrievably ruined? May we not well be astonished to see such as these receive the virginal body of Jesus, and yet continue to make war against him, appearing in our churches to attract the eyes of the congregation, at the same time that Jesus is there to fix our attention and occupy our hearts: thus they become the rivals of their Creator, and in his divine presence dispute with him the possession of souls.

O horror! o desolation! what must those pure spirits the angels think, when they see

these shameless creatures appear at sermons, much more successfully employed in gaining over souls to the devil, than the preacher in drawing them to God : for sensual men easily give way to these destructive ensnarers, who stretch out their necks to serve as matches to enkindle the flames of lust : which made a holy father call them the *bellows of hell*, which the devils use in lighting up the fire of the bottomless pit.

This it is, o women, that has made you an object of horror to the saints, who, speaking of you, call you " a notorious evil, a natural temptation, a domestic danger, the entrance of the devil, the bite of the serpent." But let me tell you that you will soon pass with the world, which will not succour you at the day of judgment; on that terrible day of God's vengeance, we shall hear you addressing the mountains, saying, o mountains fall upon us, crush us, fall upon us, and hide under your ruins us miserable wretches, wretched, alas! because we have been too much gazed at. Mothers will make the air ring again with their shrieks, on seeing that their bad examples have perpetuated their crimes in the souls of their daughters, and multiplied them, as it were, for many years after their death. The same will be the case of all other women who have excited others to iniquity, and given occasion to others by the immodesty of their dress, to imitate such worldly and diabolical fashions. All such as these are very far from adoring Jesus in the most holy sacrament, since they wage so cruel a war against him.

An Exhortation to the Love and Adoration of Jesus in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

THE *charity of Christ*, says the great apostle, *presseth us*. 2 Cor. v, 14. Truly our

hearts are overpowered with the weight of divine love. Was it not out of pure love, that the God of all goodness, called us out of nothing, and gave us our being? For where were we a few years ago, o christian souls, what were we? You and I were nothing. His having drawn us out of nothing, and given us the being we enjoy, entitle him in a sovereign degree to our whole hearts, and impose upon us the strictest obligation of for ever loving him.

Are we not moreover purchased by his blood, that blood which is above all value, of an infinite price? Does he not govern us with a wisdom no less than infinite? Does he not love us with a love which knows no bounds? Do not his sovereign beauty and majesty give him a new, as well as an absolute claim to our whole selves, to every inclination and affection of our hearts? Is not the statue the property of him, who formed it into shape? Does not the servant belong to his master, the subject to his king, the spouse to her bridegroom, a purchase to him who bought it? The consideration and certainty of these truths indeed challenge our love: but the love which Jesus in the blessed sacrament bears us, renders it impossible we should not love him. "Hard indeed must be that heart, says St. Augustin, which if it love not first, cannot be induced to love after experiencing the endearments of a generous lover."

Nothing, says the incomparable bishop of Geneva, so deeply wounds a heart of love, as the not meeting with a return of love. How will that savage, cries out the eloquent St. Chrysostom, speaking of man, behave? Whither will he fly to escape love, where conceal himself from love? Love having incorporated itself with him by the

life-giving communion of the body and blood of the Prince of love.

O christian souls, let us adore, let us adore this love of Jesus in the holy sacrament: let us fly to the foot of his sanctuary, to present our vows and respects to him, who through an excess of mercy resides therein; but above all, let us make over ourselves without reserve to serve him with inviolable fidelity, who for love of us, has made himself entirely ours. The love of God, that is, *the charity of Jesus*, says the divine St. Paul, *presseth us* to this generous act. It admits of no doubt, the heart which reflects and considers what faith teaches, concerning the goodness of our God, must either love or cease to be a heart.

Hence arose those loving sentiments in the loving heart of the great St. Francis de Sales, which caused him frequently to repeat, either *love* or *death*. Indeed a life without love is more dreadful than death: let us die therefore and love, let us die to the love of creatures and ourselves, that we may live to the love of Jesus. Such is the conclusion drawn by the great apostle from these words, *the charity of Christ presseth us;* let it be also ours, o christian souls.

If asked, after this, how much we are to love the amiable Jesus, how much we are to love love itself? St. Leo shall supply me with the answer: who says, that love being God, it ought to have no limits, the divinity itself having none." Let us therefore love with all our strength; let us, according to the measure of grace we have received, extend our love as far as we are able; and when we have loved our best, let us be covered with confusion, that we can love so little, that our love is so soon exhausted.

The blessed Stephana of the order of St. Dominic, in an extacy beholding the angels and their

manner of loving God, clearly discovered how far they were from loving him as he deserved. Whilst she was fixed in contemplating this wonder, it appeared as if a large curtain were withdrawn; after which she was favored with the sight of an abyss of love, which no created being can sufficiently love. The sight of so many unbounded perfections overwhelming her mind, forced from her the following expression. "O love! may I either love thee, or cease to be." My daughter, replied her Lord, to love me as much as I am capable of being loved, is what no creature can accomplish, men and angels being essentially finite; but reflect on the infinite love I bear myself, and let this be an endless source of comfort to you.

When therefore we seem to have attained some perfection in the art of loving, let us then confess that we are useless servants; let us at the same time be ever on our guard, that our mouths never utter the following expressions: I will love God so far; I will observe his commandments; but to love God with that generous love with which the saints love him, is neither my inclination nor my wish.

St. Macarius the elder, says, that christians ought to have no other food for their nourishment than that heavenly fire which Jesus came to bring upon earth. The Holy Spirit, which animates them, is a spirit of fire, in fire did he descend at Pentecost on his blessed mother and his apostles. It is in the fire of divine love they must wash away and purify their faults, and accomplish the work of their sanctification. This must maintain them till they arrive at the summit of perfection. It is their very air, their life, out of which they will necessarily perish, suffocated by the spirits of ma-

lice and darkness. Accursed therefore be that soul and heart which do not love Jesus.

With justice therefore does that ardent lover of Jesus, St. Augustin observe, that such as are unwilling during this life to burn with the fire of heaven, must hereafter burn eternally in the flames of hell. In paradise there can be no place for them, whose only inhabitants are the lovers of Jesus. Nor can they be admitted to reside either in the air, the earth, or the waters, for there the very birds, the animals, the fish, let them be ever so cold, pay the tribute of love, and according to their capacities discharge the duties thereof. Cause therefore, o Lord, my soul to love you; let it be entirely transformed into pure love. Yes, o God, may my whole soul be consumed, lost and annihilated in your divine love, that love which you so wonderfully display in the adorable sacrament of the altar, the sacrament of love.

O christian souls, here is to be found *the desired of all nations*: behold *the desire of the everlasting hills*: here resides the beloved Son of the eternal Father, *in whom he* was always *well pleased*. This is the Prince of the seraphim, the great God of eternities, after whom the ancient patriarchs and prophets longed and sighed. Abraham desired to see the happy days which we now behold. The prophets leaped with joy, and were all inflamed with love, though they enjoyed but a faint sight of these bright lights which every where blaze around us.

At this sight what can man do! The angels of heaven press in crowds to behold the wonderful prodigies of love, which every moment are wrought before the eyes of men. Every day, miserable as I am, the last and most ungrateful of men, I hold in my hands him, who constitutes the felicity of heaven; I press him with my lips, and

receive him into my breast. O love! o love! what are you doing so far to forget what is owing to your greatness? Tell me, o angels of paradise, did you not expect, upon seeing your sovereign consumed with love in the blessed eucharist, that man, after such a favor, would have died through love: but how great was your astonishment, having found it to produce a contrary effect.

O! my soul, think once more on these truths, and expire for sorrow if thy sins will not allow thee to die for love. The baptist never experienced the endearments we receive from our God in the holy sacrament, and yet he lived the life of love. St. Teresa is no sooner pierced with an inflamed dart than she is all love, all her actions are animated with divine love.

History informs us, that the blessed virgin appearing to a holy and innocent servant of God, with her son in her arms, this divine infant asked her if she loved him? O my Lord, answered she all in tears, I love you with all my heart. What! replied the divine infant, do not you love me even more than your own heart? At which words her heart expanding itself with love, she expired. Ah my heart, this seraph which wounded with love St. Teresa, was only a creature, the infant which appeared to the holy virgin was but an image, by a miracle, representing the person of Jesus; but in the blessed eucharist, Jesus is actually present, Jesus whom we have repeatedly received and do receive every day. Let us open our hearts, let us dilate them, and burst forth into estacies of love. Let us die with love, lose ourselves in love, and be for ever absorbed in divine love. Amiable seraphim, enkindle in our breasts your sacred fire: queen of pure love, communicate to us your flames, that being all on fire, we may be consumed as holo-

causts on the altar of love to Jesus, who resides in the adorable sacrament of love.

Let others apply their faculties as they please. But for me, whilst I have a memory, I will think on the love of my God; whilst I have a will, I will love him; whilst I have a tongue, I will proclaim him: I will run about making known to the whole world the amorous endearments of my Jesus. I will cry out to all mankind, on all occasions I will declare that our lives must be spent in the love of God alone, that when we die we may expire in the purity of divine love. I will conclude all my exhortations, as did the great St. Ignatius, with soliciting every heart to devote itself to love, to the love of God alone. This is the whole duty of man. *God alone, God alone. God alone.* O how sweet is the repetition of this sacred name: in life, at death, and after death, *God alone, God alone, God alone.*

" N. B. The following prayers and devotions are in use in those countries, where the perpetual adoration of the adorable sacrament of the altar is established."

Beads for the perpetual Adoration of the holy Sacrament of the Altar.

I ADORE you, my Lord, in the most holy sacrament of the altar, from the bottom of my heart, with all the humility and love, with which man and angels adore you.

Good Jesus, our dear Saviour, grant us pardon of all our sins, both now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

" This prayer must be recited with the greatest fervor, and proceed more from the heart than from the tongue. As it corresponds to the Hail Maries in the common rosary, it must be repeated on each of the smaller beads. On the larger

beads say an our Father, and on the cross an I believe in God, &c."

"The prayer may still be rendered shorter in the following words:" praised for ever be Jesus in the adorable sacrament of the altar. Sweet Jesus, may your holy mother, and all your saints bless you, for the many irreverences daily committed against you.

"It is highly meritorious frequently to say this rosary, as also to repeat other devout prayers, by way of reparation, for the many profanations of the adorable sacrament of the altar."

"At the hour of adoration care must be taken to make a spiritual communion, in performing which the following prayer may be of service."

My Saviour, I am sorry from the very bottom of my heart for having offended you, because you are my God. The having offended you is the sole motive of my sorrow, and I firmly resolve, by the help of your grace, never to return to sin any more. I moreover most earnestly desire to receive you, o my God, into my breast. Come then, my Saviour, come and dwell therein, and never suffer me to separate myself again from you.

"When the priest communicates in the mass, or when you communicate yourself, this prayer ought not to be omitted. Some pious souls repeat it morning and night, on the days and at the hour chosen for your adoration, you may begin and end your devotions with it."

Other Instructions and Prayers.

"THE hour of adoration may be spent in prayer, whether mental or vocal. During which, the heart ought to be more employed than the lips in honoring this mystery, in which Jesus resides in a manner entirely spiritual, whose

wish it is to be adored in spirit and in truth. The following may serve as a model in the discharge of this duty."

"Open the eyes of your faith, place yourself in the presence of Jesus-Christ, adore him profoundly, & recite the following prayers, dwelling on each sentence for some time, in order to penetrate and relish its meaning; and that on being thoroughly persuaded of its truth, you may pour forth your soul in the interior acts thereof."

My adorable Saviour Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, I most firmly believe that you are really present under the veils and outward appearances of the blessed sacrament. This I believe with greater certainty, than if I beheld you there with my own eyes, because my reason and my senses may deceive me; but your word, which assures me of its truth, being absolutely infallible, cannot deceive me. *Lord, increase my faith.*

I adore you there with all the capacity of my soul as my sovereign Lord, paying you every respect in my power, rejoicing that I depend on you as your creature, as your slave purchased at the infinite price of your blood and death. As such I tender you my most profound homage of adoration and praise. *Let your whole heart concur in this generous act.*

Since you have the goodness to dwell amongst us, o Lord, I should be ingratitude itself, an enemy to my own happiness, were I insensible of the honor you confer upon me, in admitting me to visit you, and entertain myself in your divine conversation. *Let such as are fond of making or receiving worldly visits, there be confounded at having valued them more than the company of Jesus, and let them ask pardon for this sacrilegious preference.*

I avow it, my God, that my iniquities have re-

moved me at a great distance from you, and that I justly merit to be for ever banished your presence: under this conviction I should not dare to present myself before you, did I not hear that amiable voice calling upon all such as are miserable, and telling them: *Come to me all ye that labor, and are burthened, and I will refresh you* Mat. 11.

Certain of your end, confiding in the fidelity of your promise, I throw myself at your sacred feet, an asylum ever inviolate, and there I dare to hope with full assurance that you will blot away my crimes, and grant me my salvation. *Take particular care in forming this act of hope, and say, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.*

I come again, Lord, to make my protestations of fidelity to your service, and this with a good and determined resolution never to revoke them. I renew the alliance, with which you vouchsafed to honor me at my baptism, but which I have repeatedly made void by my frequent rebellions. Invisible God, whom I adore under the veils of this sacrament, I swear once for all to bear you an eternal allegiance. Receive this solemn declaration, accept the resolution I make in the sincerity of my heart of punctually executing it. *See if these be your dispositions; beseech your Maker to ratify the promises made to him in baptism.*

Hitherto I have been wholly insensible to your interests; but now begin to feel hurt at the injuries offered you in the tremendous sacrament, the many profanations and sacrileges which heretics commit against you, the repeated insults and irreverences you receive from catholics themselves, in your temples, at the holy sacrifice, at communion, at the foot of your altars, and in the person of your ministers. *Examine what share you may have in these outrages.*

What, o Lord! shall man never cease to

contradict and insult you? Did you vouchsafe to dwell amongst us that we might treat you with outrage and scorn? *Let the sense of this treatment sink deep in your mind.*

Ah Lord, I come to make you witness of my sorrow and grief; I wish to make known how great is my affliction, by throwing myself in your sacred presence on my two knees, my hands clasped together, my face fixed on the ground, there to give vent to my tears and my sighs. In this supplicating posture, in these dispositions both of body and soul, I make you, dear Lord, an honorable reparation for myself, and for all who are guilty of these frightful crimes of high treason against the awful majesty of God. *Like a criminal, all in confusion, make this honorable reparation, and declare, that were it necessary, you would do it with an halter round your neck, and a torch in your hand.*

Open our eyes, o divine love, and change our hearts; give us a horror of all such daring attempts against your Majesty; cause catholics to venerate your sacred mysteries, and undeceive such as are heretics; who, nevertheless, are by far more excusable than us, because they neither know nor acknowledge your presence therein; whilst we, fully convinced of this truth, cease not to affront and insult your very face. *Think well on this.*

O my God and my King, that my love and veneration could equal the hatred and aversion which heretics have from this adorable sacrament! O that I were as zealous in glorifying you therein, as they are outrageous in persecuting you. O that I had the means of re-building the temples they have demolished, and of erecting again the altars they have overturned; that I could make full reparation for the sacrileges daily com-

mitted against you! *Would you really execute this wish?*

O that I could put a stop to every profanation, that I could be instrumental in procuring you in the blessed sacrament, honor, praise and adoration, from all the nations of the earth! *Make resolutions of contributing all in your power to this noble work, and offer them to Jesus Christ.*

Henceforth therefore, my God, my resolution is fixed, by the help of your grace, wholly to dedicate myself to your divine service; I will communicate with greater devotion; I will assist at mass with greater respect and attention; I will instruct my servants in their several duties; I will respect your ministers and your altars; I will be assiduous in paying my adorations on days of benediction; I will accompany you in your visits to the sick; and I will be particularly careful to receive you myself, and that others do the same, as my viaticum in my journey out of time into eternity, *Are you in earnest? promise only what you mean to perform.*

But uncertain, o my Saviour and my God, whether my summons out of this world may not be so sudden, as not to leave it in my power to receive you as my viaticum, I therefore implore it as the last of favors, I conjure you by your tender bowels of mercy and pity, not to deprive me of its salutary aid, at the hour of my death. *If your visits to Jesus Christ in the adorable sacrament, be made with proper dispositions, Jesus in return will visit you at your departure hence.*

One petition more I have to make, o source of inexhaustible mercies, refuse not, if you please, favorably to accept it: the repose of the church and your honorare the subject of it; the welfare of your church and your honor are now at stake,

Give us, o God of armies, that peace, which no other besides yourself can bestow; o Lord of hosts, stop the course of so many disorders, the necessary consequences of war; put an end to this scourge, this direful chastisement, which only serves to multiply crimes; that so your holy name may be glorified for ever, and an increase of honor and respect be paid by all the nations of the earth, to the thrice holy sacrament of the altar, Amen.

Twenty-four Adorations in Honor of the blessed Sacrament, in Reparation of the Injuries committed against it during the twenty-four Hours of the Day and Night.

1. I ADORE you, o hidden Divinity, and acknowledge you most worthy of all honor; to repair the impieties committed against you, I offer you all the adorations which Mary your mother ever paid you, from the first moment of your conception in her chaste womb, and request it as the greatest favor, that I may be allowed to say and sing with her to all eternity: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

2. I adore you, o sacred Humanity, and confess you to be infinitely amiable; in reparation of the irreverences shewn you, I offer you the respects and adorations of all the angels and archangels, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

3. I adore you, Jesus my sweet Saviour, and acknowledge you to be essentially eternal; to repair the blasphemies vomitted out against you, I offer you the praises of the choir of the principalities, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

4. I adore you, o sovereign Lord of all, and

acknowledge your entire independence; in reparation of my indevotions, I offer you the pious affections of the dominations, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the alar.*

5. I adore you, o true King of my heart, and confess you to be the King of all ages; for the many sins of anger committed against you, I offer you the zeal of the thrones, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

6. I adore you, o vigilant Shepherd of my soul, and acknowledge you infinitely amiable and lovely; to repair the faults which through gross or culpable ignorance we daily commit against you, I offer you the grateful acknowledgments of the cherubim, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

7. I adore you my dear and only Spouse, and acknowledge your inviolable fidelity; for all my negligences and slothfulness in your service, I offer you the ardent love of the seraphim, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

8. I adore you in the sacred Host, o my most sincere and cordial friend, and confess that you alone are unchangeable and immortal; for every act of despair I offer you the hope of the holy patriarchs, with whom I desire to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

9. I adore you, my most amiable Parent, and make it known that from you alone I have received my whole being; to repair the many errors conceived against you, I offer you the faith of the apostles, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

10. I adore you, most just Judge, and acknowledge your infinite mercies; to repair whatever doubts may have been formed of your real presence in the blessed sacrament, I offer you the unshaken belief of the evangelists, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

11. I adore you, charitable Pastor, and acknowledge your infinite wisdom; in reparation of the malice and revenge conceived in your presence, I offer you the heroic patience of the martyrs, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

12. I adore you, my Advocate, and acknowledge your unlimited power; for every neglect or omission, I offer you the tender solicitude of the holy bishops for the salvation of souls, with whom I hope to say and sing; *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

13. I adore you, o sacred Host, and acknowledge you to be the source of every grace and benediction which flow into our souls; for the many injustices committed in your sight, I offer you the alms and charities of all the venerable popes, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

14. I adore you, my Lord and Master, and I declare that to your wisdom and goodness there are no bounds; in reparation of the scandals committed against you, I offer you the zeal of all the holy preachers, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

15. I adore you, o dear Preserver of my life, and confess, that all honor and glory are your due; to repair the many sacrileges committed in your sight, I offer you the fervor and devotion of the holy confessors, with whom I hope to say and

sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

16. I adore you, true Bread of thanksgiving, and acknowledge that in you are found all sweetness and delight; for the many oaths I offer you in reparation whatever the holy doctors have said and done for your honor and glory, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

17. I adore you, o heavenly Food, and I acknowledge you to be our only joy on earth; for every excess in eating and drinking, I offer you the fastings and abstemiousness of the anchorets, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

18. I adore you, o Nourishment of my soul, and acknowledge your great liberalities and munificence; to repair the many railleries against your ministers, I offer you the homages of adoration paid you by the holy religious, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

19. I adore you, o sovereign Antidote, and acknowledge you to be alone powerful in taking away sin; for every distraction in time of prayer, I offer you the enraptured contemplation of the hermits, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

20. I adore you, o eternal High Priest, and acknowledge you to be worthy of every possible homage of men or angels; for the insults committed against your devout servants, I offer you the love of the sacred virgins, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

21. I adore you, o Priest and Victim, and ac-

knowledge that you infinitely surpass all the sacrifices which have gone before you; for every indecent action committed during the holy mass, I offer you the pious vows of the holy widows, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

22. I adore you, immortal Fire, and acknowledge you capable of inflaming every breast with love; for every impure action, I offer you the purity of all holy personages, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

23. I adore you, my God and dear Redeemer, and acknowledge you the Saviour of mankind; to repair every evil thought, I offer you the unremitting attention with which the blessed ever think on you, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

24. I adore you, o divine Word, concealed under the sacred host, and I confess that you are the only worthy object of my love; for every act of ingratitude shewn you by your creatures, I offer you in reparation the ready acknowledgments you constantly receive from your virgin mother, with whom I hope to say and sing: *Praised for ever be the most holy sacrament of the altar.*

A Prayer when we adore the blessed Sacrament.

JESUS, my God and my Saviour, true God and true Man, victim alone worthy of the most high, living bread and source of eternal life; I adore you with my whole heart in the adorable sacrament, wishing by this act to repair the irreverences, profanations and impieties, committed against you in this tremendous mystery. I prostrate myself in the presence of your sacred Majesty, and adore you in the name of all those,

who have never paid you any respect, and perhaps may never have the happiness to acknowledge your goodness in this sacrament of love: such as heretics, atheists, blasphemers, majicians, jews, idolaters, and infidels. I wish, o God, I could alone render you as much glory as if they were all united with me in paying you this tribute of duty and respect. O that I could collect in my faith, my love, and the sacrifice of my heart, whatever honor, whatever love, whatever glory it were possible for them to procure for you throughout endless ages! I moreover desire, with all the earnestness of my soul, to praise and bless you as much and as long as the damned shall curse and blaspheme you: to sanctify this adoration and make it more acceptable, I unite it to that which you continually receive from your church in heaven and on earth. May the sentiments of my heart rather than the words of my mouth claim your attention. Whatever your blessed mother and all your saints, inspired by your grace, do for your honor, whatever praise your eternal Father receives from you, either in the adorable sacrament, where you offer yourself to him as a perpetual holocaust, or in his sacred bosom, where he begets you to all eternity, and where you give him infinite glory by the divine essence. The same honor, adoration, glory and praise, I desire to pay you for time and eternity. Praised and adored be the most holy sacrament of the altar for ever.

FINIS.